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Vets divided over Trump comments



Handling of Putin denial viewed as positive by some, betrayal by others

BY AMANDA LEE MYERS
AND BEN FINLEY
Associated Press

U.S. military veterans have had mixed reactions to President Donald Trump's comments suggesting he believes Russian President Vladimir Putin's denial that his agents interfered in the 2016 U.S. elections.

Some say they are a betrayal, with the commander in chief giving more credence to Putin than U.S. intelligence agencies and creating a hardship for those who serve and put their lives on the line. Others say Trump's relationship with Putin is positive for the U.S., and won't change their minds about their president.

Iraq War veteran Chris Sheppard, a former combat engineer with the Marine Corps who left the military after 13 years in 2005 and is now a tax attorney, sagged to his cellphone screen in his downtown Seattle office on Monday as Trump suggested

SEE DIVIDED ON PAGE 11

Marine Corps veteran Chris Sheppard displays a picture of himself taken in Iraq in October 2004 on Tuesday at his office in Seattle. Sheppard, who served for 13 years, did not approve of President Donald Trump appearing to accept Russian President Vladimir Putin's denial that Russian agents interfered with U.S. elections in 2016.

MANUEL VALDES/AP

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Administration says 'no rush' on nuclear deal with North Korea

BY KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The Trump administration has lowered expectations for fast progress in nuclear talks with North Korea as no breakthrough on a deal has been reached more than five weeks after

the historic summit between President Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the sides have made progress on some issues, including the promised return of remains of American troops killed in the 1950-53 Korean War, which he said was expected to happen "in the next couple of weeks."

Meanwhile, he stressed that sanctions aimed at punishing the North for its nuclear weapons program will remain in place.

"There's a lot of work to do," he said Wednesday during a Cabinet meeting chaired by Trump. "It may take some time to get where we need to go, but all of this will be taking place against the backdrop

of continued enforcement of the existing sanctions."

Pompeo, who earlier this month traveled to Pyongyang for the third time since April, said the North Koreans had reaffirmed their commitment to denuclearize.

SEE DEAL ON PAGE 6

MILITARY

New Task Force 70 head sworn in aboard USS Ronald Reagan

BY CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The task force in charge of the Navy's largest battle force has a new commander after a ceremony this week aboard the USS Ronald Reagan in the Philippine Sea.

On Wednesday, Rear Adm. Karl Thomas took command of Task Force 70, which includes the Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier and a stable of guided-missile destroyers and cruisers.

Thomas said he was "tremendously humbled" to take on the new position.

"I have three simple priorities

that we are going to work for every day ... be prepared to fight and win, maximize every opportunity and take care of each other," he said during the ceremony, according to a Navy statement. "If we do all those things right, we are going to win as a team."

Thomas replaces Rear Adm. Marc Dalton, who soon will leave the Ronald Reagan's homeport of Yokosuka for Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, to become director of maritime operations at U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Dalton said it was his "great honor" to serve with the sailors of Task Force 70.

"At [forward-deployed naval forces] we deploy on the day we

get underway. We are ambassadors every single day; world events guide our missions and tasks," he told sailors, according to the Navy statement. "Your service matters every day and you have a responsibility that few sailors experience with defending our nation and building good relationships with our allies."

Dalton first took on the role of Task Force 70 commander in September after his predecessor, Rear Adm. Charles Williams, was ousted following two fatal collisions of Task Force 70 guided-missile destroyers that killed 17 sailors in 2017.

Thomas — an E-2C Hawkeye pilot — comes to Task Force 70



CODIE SOULE/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Rear Adm. Marc Dalton, left, and Rear Adm. Karl Thomas salute the colors Wednesday during the Task Force 70 change-of-command ceremony aboard the USS Ronald Reagan in the Philippine Sea.

from Arlington, Va., where he served as director of the 21st Century Sailor office, the statement said. He was commissioned in 1986 through Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Naval ROTC program and has a master's degree in information technology from the Naval Postgraduate School.

Thomas spent much of his early career deployed on the USS

Carl Vinson before returning to the ship as commanding officer in September 2014 during Operation Inherent Resolve. Other career highlights include serving as executive officer and commanding officer for Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 117 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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Army tests changes to Expert Infantryman Badge requirements

BY WILLIAM HOWARD
Stars and Stripes

The Army is planning to re-

Correction

A headline in some editions of Thursday's Stars and Stripes misstated the total weight of the munitions assembled during a training exercise at RAF Lakenheath, England. The airmen produced about 40,000 pounds of bombs.

write the book on its Expert Infantryman Badge by September.

Soldiers in a pilot program at Fort Benning, Ga., recently tested changes to the requirements for the badge, which include the revamping of proficiency on indirect fire, moving under fire, grenade use and medical care under fire.

"Their feedback was really essential to rolling out this new standard, making sure it was validated before it hit the horse," Master Sgt. Charles Evans, from the Office of the Chief of the Infantry, said in an Army statement Monday. "Just working out all the

Soldiers vying for the EIB must execute 30 tasks — 10 each on weapons, patrolling and medical care.

kinks and making sure that all the tasks were applicable, realistic and up to date with the latest doctrine."

Most of the changes are aimed at better standardizing the test, the statement said.

Soldiers vying for the EIB must execute 30 tasks — 10 each on weapons, patrolling and medical care.

The new badge manual is expected to be completed by this year's first EIB event at Fort Benning in September, the Army said.

In 1944, Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall began development of the EIB award to honor the role played by infantryman in combat.

The EIB testing process

measures the mastery of individual skills during a five-day period.

Every EIB candidate must pass an Army physical fitness test with a minimum score of 80 percent in each event, complete a day-and-night land navigation course and then spend three days rotating through the test's 30 consecutive stations.

Only 14 percent of soldiers tested earn the EIB, according to the U.S. Army Maneuver Center of Excellence.

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MILITARY



JAMES HEUSTON/Courtesy of the U.S. Army National Guard

The 142nd Field Artillery Brigade, Arkansas National Guard, fires the M109A6 Paladin Self-Propelled Howitzer during Operation Western Strike at Camp Guernsey, Wyoming. BAE Systems is working on an updated version of Paladin.

Army delays howitzer deal

By TONY CAPACCIO
Bloomberg

The U.S. Army is delaying approval of full-scale production of BAE Systems' new self-propelled howitzer, citing the need to improve quality before proceeding with additional contracts options valued at about \$1.3 billion.

The Army postponed triggering the most lucrative phase of the program for London-based BAE to "adequately address quality control issues," service spokeswoman Ashley John said in an email Wednesday. "The Army will continue to work closely with BAE leadership to resolve the concerns."

The delay came after Bloomberg News reported last week that the howitzer's manufacture was hobbled by poor welding, supply-chain problems and delivery delays. Among the setbacks have been a six-month halt in deliveries last year because of welding flaws and the return of 50 of 86 vehicles that had already been delivered to repair production deficiencies.

Self-propelled 155mm howitzers are the centerpiece of the Army's artillery. The weapon is mounted on a tracked vehicle and travels with another that hauls ammunition. The Army's "long-range precision strike" program

tops the service's list of modernization priorities.

BAE didn't have an immediate comment. Company spokeswoman Alicia Gray said last week that the company "has a rigorous inspection process to ensure we deliver the highest-quality products to the customer" and has "modified aspects of our welding practices."

The Army eventually wants to buy 576 howitzers and ammunition carriers in an \$8.1 billion program. An initial \$413.7 million contract laying the groundwork for full production was awarded in December. A full-production decision would have increased vehicle production to about 60 from 48 a year. The program has been in low-rate production for several years.

Gray said last week that the company is investing about \$125 million to upgrade equipment to prepare "for an expanded production portfolio and accommodate the expected surge in customer requirements."

The delay "is consistent with the increasing Army 'tough-love' approach to contractor program-execution challenges," such as its continuing refusal to accept delivery of Boeing Co.'s AH-64 Apache attack helicopters because of corrosion of a critical rotor assembly part that needs

to be fixed, according to James McAleese, of McAleese & Associates, a McLean, Va.-based defense consulting firm.

Contractors should expect "quality assurance scrutiny to increase" as the Army "drives aggressive increases in multiple production programs" for missiles, ammunition and ground combat vehicles, he said.

Sections of the howitzers are initially produced at BAE's York, Pa., facility, with final assembly in Elgin, Okla.

The program has a strong advocate in Sen. Jim Inhofe, of Oklahoma, the No. 2 Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee. In its version of the fiscal 2019 defense policy bill, the panel authorized spending \$110 million more than the \$351.8 million requested.

The Army's leadership is on a campaign to assure the public it's improving the oversight of its major acquisition programs, including getting its new Futures Command ready for initial operations. The Army last week chose Austin, Texas, as the location for the command that will consolidate brainpower to evaluate future threats facing the Army, decide on the technology needed to counter them and oversee development of that technology through existing commands.

Pentagon: Bid to block protection of birds unneeded

By MATTHEW DALY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is objecting to a Republican proposal in a defense policy bill that would bar the Fish and Wildlife Service from using the Endangered Species Act to protect two chickenlike birds in the western half of the U.S.

The Defense Department says in a position paper made public Wednesday that the environmental measure inserted by House Republicans is unnecessary. The House-approved language would block endangered species listing for the sage grouse and lesser prairie chicken, which roam more than a dozen states west of the Mississippi River.

The birds have become flashpoints in a legal and political battle over whether they warrant federal protection that hinders mining, logging and other economic development in states from Kansas to California.

The Pentagon says in a one-paragraph statement that the GOP provision "is not necessary to protect military testing and training." The department "urges its exclusion" from the defense bill being negotiated by House and Senate leaders, the statement said.

The Associated Press obtained a copy of the statement and confirmed its authenticity.

Lucian Niemeyer, assistant secretary of defense for energy, installations and environment, said Wednesday that officials appreciate "the continued strong support from Congress to protect military readiness and the ability to fully use all of our test and training ranges."

But Niemeyer said military installations are "not experiencing significant mission impacts related to the management" of the sage grouse, lesser prairie chicken or the American burying beetle, another threatened species targeted by the GOP bill.

The burying beetle was once found across the country but has dwindled to less than 10 percent of its historic range.

"Legislation at this time prohibiting the listing of these species may have the unintended consequence of undermining the ongoing working relationships and initiatives that DOD has with our federal, state and private partners as it relates to balancing wildlife conservation and sustaining our readiness capabilities," Niemeyer said in a statement.

Utah Rep. Rob Bishop inserted the endangered species language into the defense policy bill, arguing that federal conservation efforts for the imperiled birds and the beetle undermine military training and readiness.

Retired Major Gen. Paul Eaton, managing director of Vet Voice Foundation, an advocacy group that supports environmental causes, called the GOP rider "a shameful ploy" to undermine important public lands and wildlife protections.

"Congressional leadership must put a stop to this effort and ensure that members of Congress do not hold hostage the National Defense Authorization Act over a rider that has nothing to do with the military," Eaton said.

The GOP rider comes amid an effort by Bishop and other Republicans to advance legislation rolling back the Endangered Species Act. Republicans say the landmark 45-year-old law hinders a host of economic activities important for jobs while doing little to restore threatened species.

Democrats and environmental groups say the law has played a crucial role in protecting imperiled species such as the bald eagle, California condor, brown pelican and Florida manatee from extinction.

Air Force One to get patriotic makeover

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump says Air Force One is getting a patriotic makeover.

Trump says the familiar baby blue color on the presidential aircraft will give way to a red, white and blue color scheme. Updated models could be in service before the end of a potential Trump second term.

"Air Force One is going to be incredible," Trump told CBS News. "It's going to be top of the line, the top in the world, and it's going to

be red, white and blue, which I think is appropriate."

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Wednesday that the Air Force awarded Chicago-based Boeing Co. a \$3.9 billion contract for two presidential planes that will be ready in 2024. They will replace a pair of Boeing 747 jumbo jets that are now 31 years old.

The contract confirms a deal reached in February by Trump, the Air Force and Boeing. Sanders said the final price represented a savings of \$1.4 billion from

an initial contract proposal.

The presidential plane — it goes by the radio call sign of Air Force One when the president is on board — was once a Boeing 707 that had orange above and below the nose and "United States of America" painted on the sides in blocky, all-caps lettering.

According to Boeing history, first lady Jacqueline Kennedy picked new colors for the plane used by her husband, President John F. Kennedy. A swath of baby blue covers the nose and runs along each side of the fuselage.



JOSE LUIS MAZANA/AP

Air Force One departs from Joint Base Andrews, Md., last year.

PACIFIC

Bill aimed at mending flaws in warning system

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — Mobile phone users no longer would have the option of opting out of federal alerts about impending missile attacks or other imminent threats under a bipartisan bill introduced Wednesday in the Senate.

The Reliable Emergency Alert Distribution Improvement Act of 2018 also would require active alerts issued by the president or the Federal Emergency Management Agency to play repeatedly on television and radio, rather than just once.

The legislation, introduced by Sens. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii, and John Thune, R-S.D., is an attempt to upgrade the nation's alert system in the wake of a false missile alert issued in Hawaii on Jan. 13.

On that Saturday morning, many mobile phones received an alert saying a ballistic missile was inbound and that residents should seek immediate shelter. "This is not a drill," the message said.

The alert had been issued by mistake, but it took state officials 38 minutes to push out a second message saying there was no threat.

Meanwhile, some cellphones received no alerts at all, and television broadcasts generally offered no information about the supposed incoming missiles in the first 15 minutes — which is about all the warning time the state would have if a ballistic missile were launched from North Korea.

The false alert came at a time of elevated tensions between the U.S. and North Korea, which during the previous year had conducted tests using missiles that potentially could reach Hawaii.

The false alert set off mass panic, with some residents hiding in ditches, tunnels and

basements.

"When a missile alert went out across Hawaii in January, some people never got the message on their phones, while others missed it on their TVs and radios," Schatz said in a statement issued Wednesday. "Even though it was a false alarm, the missile alert exposed real flaws in the way people receive emergency alerts."

The U.S. has a bifurcated warning system comprising the Emergency Alert System and the Wireless Emergency Alert System. FEMA is in charge of the platform government agencies use to originate alerts, while the Federal Communications Commission administers the systems used to disseminate alerts over broadcast and mobile wireless networks.

The proposed Senate legislation also would authorize research for creating a system of emergency alerts to appear on audio and video online streaming services, such as Netflix and Spotify.

The bill would mandate FEMA to create a set of best practices for issuing alerts, avoiding false alerts and retracting false alerts if they occur. It also would establish a reporting system for false alerts so the FCC could track them to examine their causes.

Last week, the FCC authorized state and local officials to conduct "live code" tests of the Emergency Alert System. Such tests would use the same alert codes and processes that would be used in an actual emergency to increase both the proficiency of those at the helm and the public's knowledge of the system.

In June, the Senate passed a bipartisan bill that would give the federal government the sole authority to alert the public of a missile threat.

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SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

Philippine Rangers Capt. Alex Estabaya and Capt. Ramse Dugan, who fought in the battle to liberate Marawi from Islamic State insurgents, stand in Marawi City, Philippines, in November.

US gives Philippines \$26.5M for police counterterrorism efforts

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. will give the Philippines \$26.5 million during the next two years to boost police counterterrorism efforts.

"The assistance will include training, equipment, and other support to build comprehensive law enforcement capacity within a rule of law framework to deny terrorist operations, funding, and movement," the U.S. Embassy in Manila said Thursday in a statement announcing the funding.

The Philippines is battling Islamic State-inspired terrorists, including those ejected from the southern city of Marawi following a bloody siege last year. Leftist groups such as the Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army also pose a terrorism threat in the islands.

The U.S. Agency for International Development said it has committed \$26.4 million to helping communities affected by the Marawi conflict.

The U.S. gave Philippine law enforcement \$32 million in 2016

but canceled the provision of 26,000 M4 assault rifles to police over concerns about extrajudicial killings in maverick President Rodrigo Duterte's drug war.

Under President Donald Trump, ties have warmed with an end to public criticism by U.S. officials of the counternarcotics effort and more robust military engagement.

The new law enforcement funding will help pay for the investigation and prosecution of terrorism cases and programs to counter radicalization to violence and violent extremism, the embassy said.

The support parallels U.S. efforts to build counterterrorism capabilities in the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

In March, for example, the U.S. delivered six ScanEagle surveillance drones worth \$13 million to boost counterterrorism capabilities among other things.

"The United States is a proud ally of the Philippines and will continue to provide whole-of-government support and assistance to Philippine counter-

terrorism efforts as we work together to address shared threats to the peace and security of both of our countries," the embassy said.

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Problems force 2 Japanese F-15s to land at Kadena

By AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A pair of Japanese F-15 fighter jets made unscheduled landings Wednesday at an American air base on Okinawa.

The aircraft had scrambled to identify foreign aircraft approaching Japanese airspace when one of the pilots noticed that an inspection panel was open on his jet, said a Japan Air Self-Defense Force spokesman.

The jet could have continued its mission;

however, the pilot, concerned that a part might fall out of the compartment and be a hazard to other aircraft, decided to land at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, he said.

"The other jet on the scramble mission was running low on fuel, so the pilot also decided to land at Kadena," the spokesman said.

Both aircraft took off again about 8 p.m., he said.

The incident follows flight disruptions on Tuesday evening at nearby Naha Airport after two times burst on a Japanese E-2C Hawkeye early warning plane.

The closure affected nearly 100 flights and about 9,400 passengers over two days, according to the Okinawa Times newspaper.

Naha Air Base commander Hidetada Inatsuki issued a statement Tuesday apologizing for the disruption.

"Our profuse apologies on closing the Naha Airport runway," he said. "It caused so much trouble for many people and airlines. We will find the cause of the incident and make sure it doesn't happen again."

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MILITARY

Delayed 'Forever' GI Bill poised for launch

By CLAUDIA GRISALES
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A major expansion of veterans' education benefits — a protracted process beset by communication and information technology challenges — is finally on track to launch next month, Department of Veterans Affairs officials testified Wednesday before a House committee panel.

Last year, the VA said it would hire 200 temporary workers and shell out \$70 million to implement the "Forever" GI Bill, which contains 34 changes to veterans' education benefits and boosts spending by \$3 billion for 10 years. Higher-than-anticipated costs have been one of a number of problems that the agency faced in the yearlong charge to implement the plan, which most recently had a July 16 target date that had to be postponed.

"This is a complex, heavy-lift effort," retired Maj. Gen. Robert Worley II, director of VA education services, told the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs subpanel on economic opportunity. "We made very good progress to date. We didn't get to the (July 16) date we were hoping for; we needed to slip that about a month and that's where we are. We have a handful of defects left."

"We are doing everything we can to make sure that the experience of the veteran is seamless."

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Robert Worley II
director of VA education Services

Worley, who testified alongside a witness panel of VA officials, went to Capitol Hill on Wednesday to update lawmakers on implementation of H.R. 3218, the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act. The effort, which was named for the author of the original GI Bill of Rights, increases payments to veterans with less than one year of active-duty service, restores benefits to veterans whose schools abruptly close, awards full GI Bill benefits to all Purple Heart recipients and increases aid for veterans pursuing science, technology, engineering and mathematics degrees, among other things.

It was dubbed the "Forever" GI Bill by supporters because it ends a 15-year limit on education benefits for veterans whose last discharge or release from active duty came on or after Jan. 1, 2013. Advocates have called it the most sweeping expansion of veterans

education benefits in a decade.

"It is critical that we work to ensure that this bill is implemented in a way that is consistent with Congress' intent and that veterans receive the benefits in a timely and consistent manner," Rep. Jodey Arrington, R-Texas, chairman of the subcommittee on economic opportunity, said in opening remarks for Wednesday's hearing.

The bill was signed into law Aug. 16, 2017, and most of its provisions go into effect Aug. 1. Of the 34 measures in the bill, 22 require "significant changes" to the VA's IT systems. The agency determined costs to program its IT systems to recognize the changes in benefits would cost about \$70 million — an amount more than double the \$30 million originally

estimated for the task.

By late last year, Worley said the VA was in the process of hiring 200 temporary employees who would process claims by hand until the IT system was improved with a 40- to 50-person team that would be responsible for deciding which veterans would be eligible for increased aid for STEM degrees. Worley and other VA officials said late last year that they were confident the expansion would be fully in place before the start of the 2018-19 school year.

"We expect a wave of enrollments to come in between now and the early part of the fall, so that will be an increased workload, and that's why we have more people and overtime scheduled and those kinds of things,"

Worley said. "We will need to do some reworks for enrollments that come in between now and mid-August."

He also said he would rate his group's performance implementing the plan at an 8 on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being perfect.

"We are doing everything we can to make sure that the experience of the veteran is seamless," Worley said.

A full breakdown of changes to the GI Bill is available on the VA website at benefits.va.gov, and veterans can follow updates on its implementation at the VA's Post-9/11 GI Bill Facebook page.

Stars and Stripes reporter Nikki Wentling contributed to this report grisales.claudia@stripes.com
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4 Injuries reported in blast at Pennsylvania Army depot

Associated Press

CHAMBERSBURG, Pa. — A small explosion Thursday in a vehicle shop at an Army depot injured four workers, officials said.

The blast occurred at Letterkenny Army Depot about 7:15 a.m. Army Depot officials quickly posted on social media that the blast was contained, that operations elsewhere on the base would not be affected and that there was no suspicion of terrorist activity.

Col. Stephen Ledbetter, the depot commander, said three victims were flown to Baltimore

area hospitals and the fourth left in an ambulance.

A fire company said three had burns. Their conditions were not immediately available.

Ledbetter said the explosion occurred in the painting area of a vehicle shop.

The depot employs about 3,600 people. The depot's website says work there focuses on air defense tactical missile ground support equipment, mobile electric power generation equipment, Patriot missile recertification and route guidance vehicles.

Tent collapse causes injuries at California military base

Associated Press

FORT HUNTER LIGGETT, Calif. — A helicopter blew down a tent at the Fort Hunter Liggett military base in California on Wednesday night, injuring 22 people, a spokeswoman said.

An Army UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter was landing about 9:30 p.m. when the wind from its rotor caused the tent to collapse, said Army Phillips, public information officer at the base.

Of the 22 reported injuries, 17 were treated at a hospital and released. Another five were treated

at the scene, Phillips said.

Initial reports she received said only four people had been taken to the hospital, Phillips said. Phillips said she did not know the extent of the injuries of those who were hospitalized.

The accident occurred during an annual training exercise for thousands of Army, Navy, Air Force, Army National Guard, Army Reserve and Canadian Armed Forces troops.

The sprawling Fort Hunter Liggett is the largest U.S. Army Reserve Command post.



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PACIFIC

Families fault N. Korea's effort

Kim hasn't returned any US war remains

By ROBERT BURNS
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More than a month after North Korea pledged to immediately return some American war dead, the promise is unfulfilled.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who traveled to Pyongyang this month to press the North Koreans further, said Wednesday the return could begin “in the next couple of weeks.” But it could take months or years to positively identify the bones as those of specific American servicemen.

In a joint statement at their Singapore summit, President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un committed to recovering the remains of prisoners of war and those missing in action decades after the Korean War — “including the immediate repatriation of those already identified.”

That was more than a month ago, on June 12. Although Trump said eight days later that the repatriation had happened, it had not. It still has not. So, it was not “immediate,” though Stars and Stripes newspaper reported from South Korea on Tuesday that the North has agreed to transfer as many as 55 sets of remains next week. The Pentagon and the State Department declined to comment on any specifics promised by the North.

“We’re making progress along the border to get the return of remains, a very important issue for those families,” Pompeo said Wednesday at the White House. “I think in the next couple of weeks we’ll have the first remains returned, that’s the commitment, so progress is certainly being made there.”

Likely also to prove untrue is the part of the Trump-Kim statement that said the North had war remains “already identified.” It apparently has bones and perhaps associated personal effects, but history shows that any remains handed over by the North are likely to be difficult to identify. In recent days the State Department has changed that phrase to “already collected,” suggesting it realized the remains have not been identified.

“There are no missing Americans who have been ‘already identified’ by the DPRK (North Korea) to be repatriated,” said Paul Cole, who has researched POW-MIA issues from the Korean War for decades and served for four years as a scientific fellow at the Pentagon’s Central Identification



ANDREW HARNIK, POOL/AP

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, right, and Kim Yong Chol, a North Korean senior ruling party official and former intelligence chief, dined and talked face-to-face in Pyongyang, North Korea, earlier this month.

Laboratory in Hawaii. He said this element of the Singapore statement “reflects a near total ignorance of the role of science” in accounting for war dead.

There is even some doubt that any remains turned over would be of Americans. Trump admitted as much in a CBS News interview last week.

“You know, remains are complicated,” he said. “Some of the remains, they don’t even know if they are remains.”

That’s a big step back from his false assertion June 20 in Duluth, Minn.: “We got back our great fallen heroes, the remains sent back today, already 200 got sent back.”

Richard Downes, whose father, Air Force Lt. Hal Downes, is among the Korean War missing, says hopes may have been raised too quickly.

“Yes, the Singapore statement overpromised,” he said, “exacerbated by our hope that it was accurate.”

Hope has long sustained Downes and thousands of other Americans who seek closure after decades of uncertainty about a relative missing from the war. The Pentagon says 7,699 U.S. servicemen are missing from Korea, including about 5,300 believed to be in the North. Downes, 70, was 3½ when his father’s B-26 Invader went down on Jan. 13, 1952, northeast of Pyongyang, the North Korean capital. His

family was left to wonder about his fate. Downes is now executive director of the Coalition of Families of Korean and Cold War POW/MIAs, which advocates for remains recovery.

The Singapore statement may yet prove to be an important breakthrough. Bringing its promise to fruition, however, is proving harder than Trump made it seem.

As Mark Fitzpatrick, of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, put it in a web essay last week, “What was supposed to be the easiest item on the United States-North Korea negotiations agenda — the return of Korean War soldiers’ remains — is proving to be yet another sticking point.”

Beyond the promised initial return of remains that the North may have been holding in storage for years, the State Department said Sunday the two sides have agreed to restart searches for burial locations of U.S. war remains in North Korea. That effort was suspended by the U.S. in 2005. That raises another delicate issue to be negotiated: how much the U.S. would pay the North for this access. In the past it has paid millions, saying the money was “fair and reasonable compensation” for the North’s help, not payment for bones or information.

In Fitzpatrick’s view, the North has dangled the promise of war remains as bait to attain political objectives.

Deal: Researchers see nuke shutdown as taking 10 years

FROM FRONT PAGE

“We’re making progress along the border to get the return of remains, a very important issue for those families,” he added. “We think in the next couple of weeks we’ll have the first remains returned. That’s the commitment.”

Kim’s agreement to resume the long-stalled search for the remains of thousands of Americans believed lost in the North, “including the immediate repatriation of those already identified,” was one of the four points in the final summit declaration along with a general promise to work toward the “complete denuclearization” of the divided peninsula.

A U.S. official told Stars and Stripes that the North might return as many as 55 sets of remains on July 27, which is the 65th anniversary of the signing of the armistice that ended the war, although that date could change as more talks were needed to finalize the details.

Pompeo’s remarks followed the tone set by Trump this week, when the president said “we have no time limit” since the North hasn’t test-fired a missile in nearly eight months. He also said Russia has agreed to help with the North but did not say how.

“There is no rush, the sanctions remain! Big benefits and exciting future for North Korea at end of process!” Trump added in a tweet Wednesday.

The president has maintained optimism despite criticism that the North has not agreed to any specific measures, timelines or even a definition of denuclearization.

He frequently points out that the diplomatic outreach has tamped down tensions that spiked last year as the countries traded threats and the North demonstrated rapid progress in the development of an intercontinental ballistic missile and conducted its sixth and most powerful nuclear test.

The acknowledgment that it will take more time contrasts sharply with remarks made immediately after the unprecedented summit in Singapore on June 12, when Trump said the denuclearization process would be started “very quickly” and declared that the North no longer poses a nuclear threat.

National Security Adviser John Bolton said more recently that Washington has a plan that would lead to the dismantling of the North’s nuclear and missile programs in a year.

Experts, however, have cautioned that the process will take time.

A team of Stanford University researchers, including nuclear physicist Siegfried Hecker, proposed a 10-year road map for the task.

“Both the US and North Korea are still sending mixed messages as to whether and how they will approach denuclearization, fueling skepticism about North Korea’s willingness to give up its nuclear weapons and hinting at the US’s lack of a coherent strategy in dealing with the regime,” academics Gi-Wook Shin and Joyce Lee said in a commentary posted on the 38 North website.

“Any goal of rapid denuclearization will be proven as unrealistic as it is aggressive,” they added.

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Estimate: N. Korea has 2.6 million ‘modern slaves’

The Washington Post

North Korea has the highest prevalence of modern slavery in the world, with 1 out of every 10 citizens a victim under the practice, according to estimates included in a new report.

More than 2.6 million people live under modern slavery in the country, the 2018 Global Slavery Index found, with the vast majority forced to work by the state. The report also argued that the North Korean government had the weakest response to slavery out of all the countries surveyed, as the North Korean state itself is involved in forced labor both inside and outside of the country.

The report defines modern slavery as slavery itself, as well as human trafficking, forced labor, debt bondage, forced or servile marriage, and the sale and exploi-

tation of children.

The findings come amid ongoing negotiations between North Korea and the United States, as well as concurrent inter-Korean talks with South Korea. These talks have focused on denuclearization and military issues rather than human rights issues such as slavery.

“There’s a strong focus on bombs and missiles, but the North Korean tragedy is more about lost freedom through the brutal suppression of human potential,” said Andrew Forrest, founder of the Walk Free Foundation.

Under the leadership of Forrest, an Australian mining magnate turned anti-slavery campaigner, Walk Free has published the Global Slavery Index since 2013. The index aims to estimate the number of modern slaves in a country, rather than just

count reported cases; the organization argues the illicit practice is more widespread than records show.

In the past some experts, such as human trafficking scholar Anne Gallagher, have criticized the methodology of Walk Free’s estimates, though the organization has revised its process a number of times in response to criticism. Last year, it joined with the U.N.-affiliated International Labor Office to release a report that estimated 40.3 million people were in some form of modern slavery around the world on any given day last year.

For this year’s index, Walk Free teamed with Leiden Asia Centre and South Korea-based Database Center for North Korean Human Rights in a bid to reach accurate estimates for North Korea, arguably the most secretive nation on Earth.

MILITARY

VA watchdog reveals unwarranted medical exams

By CLAUDIA GRISALES
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — A Department of Veterans Affairs watchdog has discovered the agency spent about \$10 million in unwarranted medical exams for military veterans, and warned another \$101 million could be lost from similar procedures in the next five years.

Last year, the Veterans Benefits Administration required nearly 20,000 disabled veterans to submit to unwarranted, follow-up medical exams — also known as “re-examinations” — to verify whether a disability was still present or had worsened, the VA inspector general estimated.

“While re-examinations are important in the appropriate situation to ensure taxpayer dollars are appropriately spent, unwarranted re-examinations cause undue hardship for veterans,” the inspector general said in a report released Tuesday. “They also generate excessive work, re-

sulting in significant costs and the diversion of VA personnel from veteran care and services.”

The 25-page report is the latest indication of wasteful spending at the VA, a concern that has long plagued the agency.

In its latest findings, the VA inspector general said Veterans Benefits Administration employees did not consistently follow policy to request the follow-up exams only when necessary.

The VA watchdog reviewed a sample of 300 follow-up patient exams from March 2017 through August 2017 and found 111 of the exams were unwarranted. Based on that sample, the watchdog’s review team estimated an overall 37 percent — or 19,800 patient exams — of the total 53,500 conducted during the same six months were unneeded evaluations.

The unneeded patient visits were valued at an estimated \$10.1 million, which is comprised of \$5.3 million spent for the

Veterans Health Administration clinicians and \$4.8 million to pay contractors, according to the VA watchdog report.

At such a pace, the Veterans Benefits Administration is now on track to waste \$100.6 million on similar exams in the next five years, the report stated.

That is, “unless it ensures that employees only request re-examinations when necessary,” the report states.

Of the 19,800 veterans who underwent the unneeded exams, 14,200 of them saw no change to their disability evaluations. Of the 14,200, an estimated 3,700 veterans saw proposed benefit reductions, which remained subject to a final decision and appeal process before the VA watchdog completed its report.

The nonessential exams also created additional workloads for VA workers, according to the watchdog report.

That “reduced VBA’s capacity to process benefits claims and the Veterans Health Administration’s capacity to provide health

care services,” the report concluded.

A Veterans Benefit Administration policy requires a review of a veteran’s claims to determine whether a follow-up exam, or re-examination, is needed. The review serves as a control to prevent pointless follow-up exams.

But the VA inspector general said it found a vast majority of the 19,800 veteran patient exams last year — 78 percent — didn’t get a pre-exam review, with those cases referred for medical visits instead.

A series of factors should have prevented many of these unnecessary follow-up exams from occurring, such as the presence of a permanent disability that showed no signs of improving and cases involving patients who were older than age 55, the report stated.

The VA did not immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday.

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Cronauer, airman who inspired ‘Good Morning, Vietnam’ film, dies at 79

Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. — Adrian Cronauer, the man whose military radio antics inspired a character played by Robin Williams in the film “Good Morning, Vietnam,” has died. He was 79.

Mary Muse, the wife of his

stepson Michael Muse, confirmed Thursday that Cronauer died Wednesday after a long illness. He had lived in Troutville, Va.

During his service as a U.S. Air Force sergeant in Vietnam in 1965 and 1966, Cronauer opened his Armed Forces Radio show

with the phrase, “Goooooood morning, Vietnam!” Williams made the refrain famous in the 1987 film, loosely based on Cronauer’s time in Saigon.

The film was a departure from other Vietnam War movies that focused on bloody realism, such

as the Academy Award-winning “Platoon.” Instead, it was about irreverent youth in the 1960s fighting the military establishment.

“We were the only game in town and you had to play by our rules,” Cronauer told The Associated Press in 1987. “But I wanted

to serve the listeners.”

The military wanted conservative programming. American youths, however, were “not into drab, sterile announcements” with middle-of-the-road music, Cronauer said, and the battle over the airwaves was joined.

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WAR ON TERRORISM

Votel: It's time for Pakistan to step up in Afghan peace efforts

By DIANNA CAHN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON—A successful cease-fire between Afghan forces and Taliban fighters last month helped create an “unprecedented opportunity” for peace efforts in Afghanistan, and now Pakistan—as a key regional player—must step up to the plate, the top commander of U.S. operations in the region said Thursday.

“We are seeing a very unprecedented and unique opportunity,” said Army Gen. Joseph Votel, the commander of U.S. Central Command. “Cooperation from Pakistan remains key to accomplishing the overall objective of a durable political settlement in Afghanistan,” he said. “Now is the time for them to step forward.”

Pakistan shares a long, porous border with Afghanistan. Throughout the U.S.-led campaign in Afghanistan that began after Sept. 11, 2001, U.S.-Pakistan relations have been delicate and often fraught, with U.S. officials pressing Pakistan to stop giving haven to Taliban and al-Qaida operatives and resources. U.S. officials often have complained that Pakistani cooperation has been inconsistent and incomplete.

Speaking to reporters at the Pentagon via teleconference from his headquarters in Tampa, Fla., Votel said he maintains a “long-standing and ‘robust relationship’” with the Pakistan chief of army staff and the two talk weekly. While there have been some signs of increased Pakistani efforts to help drive peace, Votel said it needs to do more.

Votel noted that Afghan-Pakistan peace discussions have led to an increase in cooperation between the two militaries and that he’s seen a decrease in clashes along the border.

“Pakistan must continue to ‘press against the violence’ by arresting and expelling militants and by making greater efforts to

“compel the Taliban to come to the table,” he said. “We have seen over the last few months some promising opportunities,” he said. “We’ve seen Pakistan move in some of the directions we’ve asked them to. But we need to see them do that in a more strategic way.”

Votel said he is encouraged by the conditions demonstrated by the three-day cease-fire in June. The main parties honored the halt in fighting, and while it was only temporary, it marked a “demonstrated desire for peace” not just from the Afghan people but also the Taliban and other militant fighters, he said.

There are other indicators that the time is ripe, he said. Afghan defense forces are making strides in training, conducting simultaneous operations around the country and continuing military pressure on the Taliban’s ability to generate revenue.

He’s also encouraged, he said, that Afghan security forces are undergoing a massive reorganization that includes replacing older leadership with young American and coalition-trained officers and commanders. “At the same time, more than 70 percent of eligible Afghan voters have registered for upcoming parliamentary elections.

With a commitment for international support in place until 2024 and President Ashraf Ghani making what he called “courageous offers” to move forward with the cease-fire and peace talks, he said new ground for peace has been prepared.

The Afghan people and many Taliban “grow ready for peace as evidenced by peace marches, local and international religious ulema (Islamic scholars) condemnations of the insurgency, broad diplomatic support to the Afghan-owned peace process and, of course, the cease-fire,” he said. “Now is the time to do this.”

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Votel: ‘No new guidance’ after Trump-Putin summit

By DIANNA CAHN
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON—The head of U.S. Central Command received no new direction for U.S. military efforts in Syria in the wake of President Donald Trump’s meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin this week.

Asked Thursday whether the meeting between Trump and Putin in Helsinki yielded new marching orders for military operations in Syria, Army Gen. Joseph Votel said he had been given “no new guidance.”

“For us, right now, it’s steady as she goes,” he told reporters at the Pentagon via teleconference from his Tampa, Fla., headquar-

ters. “We have no further direction than we have been currently operating on.”

Under a law enacted by Congress in the wake of Russia’s invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014, U.S. forces are barred from military coordination with Russia, Votel said.

Currently, U.S. and Russian commanders communicate for the sole purpose of “deconfliction” so they don’t end up targeting each other’s forces.

Votel said the U.S. mission in Syria remains focused on defeating Islamic State and stabilizing Iraq and Syria, Russia, by supporting the regime of President Bashar Assad, is working at cross-purposes to that end, he said.



Residents of a Taliban district and an Afghan army soldier gather with a Taliban flag June 16 in Logar province.

J.P. LAWRENCE/Stars and Stripes

Report: Cease-fires suggest Taliban could unite for talks

By J.P. LAWRENCE
Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan—The Taliban’s ability to maintain discipline among its members throughout their recent cease-fire could raise hopes the militant group—often described as fractious and disorganized—could unite for peace talks, an international think tank said in a report Thursday.

“That Taliban leaders were able to enforce a major political decision throughout the movement is particularly noteworthy,” said the report by the Brussels-based International Crisis Group. “Even members who questioned the logic behind the cease-fire respected their leaders’ decision.”

The Afghan government launched an eight-day unilateral cease-fire in June, to which the Taliban responded with its own three-day cease-fire.

The Taliban often have been seen as a loose coalition of fractious tribesmen, with local warlords commanding bands of guerrillas operating semi-autonomously from any central military or political command. But the mostly peaceful three-day Eid holiday revealed surprising levels of unity within the insurgent group, the report said.

Interviews conducted by the Crisis Group with key Taliban and Afghan leaders provided a glimpse into how the unprecedented joint cease-fires came into being.

A small group of Taliban leaders lobbied for a positive response to Ghani’s offer of a cease-fire, telling observers that the group sought to change its image as purely a “war machine,” the report said.

The idea of a cease-fire had been floating around in Taliban circles since at least last winter, but insurgent leaders deemed the gesture too risky and too likely to be cited by U.S. officials as proof of success by NATO military forces in Afghanistan, now involved in a mainly training-and-advocacy role.

The insurgents announced their own cease-fire during Eid, which marks the end of Ramadan. The announcement meant there would be three days in which the two cease-fires would run concurrently.

Many Taliban commanders were surprised by the announcement of a cease-fire, according to audio recordings obtained by the Crisis Group. But even those Taliban commanders who were startled expressed support, the report said.

Analysts in Kabul and Washington told Stars and Stripes that part of the Kabul government’s strategy in declaring the cease-fire seemed aimed at splitting the Taliban into pro- and anti-peace factions. They said it was unclear how much control the Taliban leadership in Quetta, Pakistan, has over local commanders and crime bosses affiliated with various insurgent factions.

Taliban leaders, meanwhile, believed a successful cease-fire could demonstrate the movement’s cohesion. In that respect, the Taliban succeeded because they enforced the truce without anyone going rogue, the report said.

In many parts of Afghanistan, the cease-fires led to spontaneous celebrations in which Taliban and Afghan soldiers hugged one another, sipped tea and took selfies together. Families that had been torn apart by a long war reunited.

When Ghani extended the government cease-fire by more than a week, the Taliban declined to follow suit, at least partly out of

fear that it would expose friction within the movement, the researchers said.

Some of the revelry during the three-day truce apparently raised the ire of the group’s leadership.

Militants were ordered back to their “trenches” and were threatened with punishment for entering government-controlled areas following a deadly blast that targeted a celebratory gathering of civilians, government officials and insurgents on the second day of the cease-fire in eastern Afghanistan. The local Islamic State affiliate, which was not party to either cease-fire, claimed the bombing and followed it up with another a day later.

Still, the celebrations revealed several beliefs held in common by both the Taliban and government forces. In interviews with researchers, both sides spoke repeatedly about the desire for peace and for the nation to come together.

A belief that outsiders, not Afghans, had fueled the war united both sides, the report said.

In one set of interviews in Ghazni, a Taliban soldier and an Afghan soldier told researchers they were friendly toward one another because the real enemies were from America and Pakistan.

“America and Pakistan are both enemies of the Afghans,” the unidentified government soldier said. “We both agree that if all Afghans come together to say ‘no’ to foreigners, there will be peace in Afghanistan.”

Members of the Taliban told researchers that they might be willing to compromise on certain issues once believed to be irreconcilable, including allowing the continued presence of foreign troops and leaving the government’s security forces intact if the guerrillas are allowed to join.

Stars and Stripes reporter Chad Garland contributed to this report.
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NATION



Steam billows in New York after a steam pipe exploded beneath Fifth Avenue in Manhattan early Thursday.

RICHARD DREW/AP

New Yorkers steamed but OK as pipe bursts

By KAREN MATTHEWS

Associated Press

NEW YORK — A steam pipe exploded beneath Fifth Avenue in Manhattan early Thursday, hurling chunks of asphalt, sending a geyser of billowing white steam stories into the air and forcing pedestrians to take cover.

No injuries were reported, but Con Ed, which owns the subterranean pipe, warned people who may have gotten material on them to bag their clothes and shower immediately as a precaution against possible asbestos.

Buildings along several blocks of Fifth Avenue have been evacuated as a precaution.

The high-pressure steam leak was reported at around 6:40 a.m. Steam was still billowing about 10 stories high two hours later.

WABC reported there also were manhole explosions from West 19th Street to West 21st street. Some subway trains were bypassing the area.

"It was riding my Citi Bike to work and just as I was crossing Fifth Avenue around 25th Street, I looked down Fifth Avenue and saw smoke coming," Jerry Bonura, who works at a consulting firm, told the Daily News. The "cloud wasn't too big at first, but I could tell it probably wasn't a fire since the smoke was lightly colored as opposed to dark colored

from a building fire, and I heard kind of a windy/blowing noise coming from it."

"I looked around and saw this big huge plume of steam shoot into the air," said Daniel Lizio-Katzen, 42, who was riding his bike home to the West Village.

"It was a pretty violent explosion," Lizio-Katzen told the newspaper. "The steam was shooting up into the air about 70 feet. It was pushing up at such a high pressure that it was spewing all of this dirt and debris. The cars around were coated in mud ... It left a huge crater in the middle of the street."

Brendan Walsh, 22, a senior at New York University, had just gotten off a train and was headed to class when he saw the plume.

"The billows were about six stories high. There was a large scatter of debris," he said. "I was standing behind the police line when a Con Ed worker came rushing over and screaming at police and firefighters to push everyone north because he was worried that there could be secondary manhole explosions."

"Everyone — including the police and firefighters who were standing by — started moving back," he said.

Businesses were braced for the worst as the response dragged on, shutting their neighborhood and their workday.

Russian officials to meet suspected spy held in DC

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russian Embassy officials were to meet Thursday with a Siberian gun rights activist jailed in Washington on charges of spying on the United States as Moscow blasted the arrest as "anti-Russian hysteria."

The embassy said in a Facebook post that consular officials will meet with Maria Butina for the first time since her Sunday arrest and will provide her "all necessary help."

Butina, 29, denies wrongdoing, and the Russian government claims the arrest was driven by U.S. domestic politics and an overall anti-Russian mood.

U.S. federal prosecutors accuse Butina of being a covert Russian agent, having contacts with the KGB successor agency FSB, and using sex and deception to forge influential U.S. connections.

Court documents released at her hearing Wednesday outlined ways Butina allegedly worked covertly to establish back-chan-

nel lines of communication to the Kremlin and infiltrate U.S. political organizations, including the National Rifle Association.

Her father, Valery Butin, said the family has been unable to speak to Butina since her arrest, according to the TASS news agency.

Butina grew up in a modest apartment building in the Siberian city of Barnaul, closer to the Mongolian and Kazakh borders than Moscow.

One of her former teachers told The Associated Press that Butina initially thought she would follow her father's footsteps as an entrepreneur, and opened a string of furniture stores. But she developed an appetite for high-level politics after going to a special camp for young political hopefuls run by the pro-Kremlin United Russia party, said Konstantin Emeshin, founder of the School of Real Politics in Barnaul, where Butina got her first degree.

"She came back inspired, having met lots of people," he said.

Butina later moved to Moscow, started a gun rights group, and then moved to the U.S., where she got a graduate degree in May from American University. U.S. prosecutors say her studies were a cover for her covert activities.

Emeshin said that Butina was considering a job in Silicon Valley after graduation and told him she felt herself "at a crossroads."

A week before her arrest, Emeshin said, she contacted him on Facebook and asked for the contacts of specialists who defend "victims of political repression." She didn't elaborate. Butina had already been questioned by the U.S. Senate and had her apartment searched by the FBI in recent months.

Butina awaits trial on charges of conspiracy and acting as an unregistered foreign agent for Russia. She pleaded not guilty Wednesday but was ordered held in jail as the case moves forward because of fears she would flee the country.

GOP's nonbinding immigration bill becomes a campaign battlefield

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Republicans and Democrats competed to make immigration an election-year issue on their own terms as the GOP pushed symbolic legislation through the House Wednesday extolling a federal law enforcement agency that some liberals have proposed abolishing.

The measure, which changes no laws, represents a Republican drive to take advantage of an earlier Democratic bill erasing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The GOP resolution approved Wednesday says attempts to eliminate ICE would let "dangerous criminal aliens" stay in the U.S. and "insult" the agency's officers.

The Democratic bill wiping out the agency had nine sponsors but was shunned by others worried it risked estranging moderate voters. Abolishing ICE has become

a rallying cry for the party's liberal wing, including Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and upstart House candidate Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who stated a 10-term congressman in a New York Democratic primary. Republicans were determined to use that push to cast Democrats as extreme.

"Any other vote than a yes vote is for open borders," the No. 3 House GOP leader, Rep. Steve Scalise, of Louisiana, said of his party's resolution praising the immigration agency. House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said the effort to eliminate ICE was being pushed by "the new socialist Democratic party."

Democrats said Republicans were trying to distract voters from President Donald Trump, his now-dropped policy of separating migrant children from their parents and his statements

challenging the finding that Russia interfered in the 2016 elections.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., said the GOP resolution was "a meaningless political stunt to change the subject from the international and domestic shame unleashed on us by President Trump."

The GOP resolution acclaiming ICE was approved 244-35, with 133 Democrats voting "present" to protest the measure. All but one voting Republican backed the measure along with 18 Democrats, many from competitive districts.

The vote came the same day House Republicans released a spending bill providing \$5 billion next year for building Trump's proposed border wall with Mexico. That would represent a major boost and suggests a raucous pre-election budget battle may lie ahead.

President, first lady mourn Secret Service agent who died in Scotland

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump paid their respects Wednesday to the family of a Secret Service agent who died in Scotland while supporting their overseas trip.

Special Agent Nole E. Remagen suffered a stroke Monday during Trump's trip to Belgium, England, Scotland and Finland. The 19-year veteran died in Scot-

land on Tuesday, surrounded by immediate family and Secret Service colleagues. His body was being returned to the U.S. on Wednesday.

"Our hearts are filled with sadness over the loss of a beloved and devoted Special Agent, husband, and father," Trump said in a statement. "Our prayers are with Special Agent Remagen's loved ones, including his wife and two young children. We grieve with

them and with his Secret Service colleagues, who have lost a friend and a brother."

The Trumps departed the White House on the Marine One helicopter on Wednesday to attend a wedding at Joint Base Andrews, Md., where the body of Remagen, who also served five years in the U.S. Marine Corps, was due to arrive.

From The Associated Press

NATION

FBI chief: Russian operations ongoing

By DEB RIECHMANN
AND DESMOND BUTLER
Associated Press

ASPEN, Colo. — FBI Director Christopher Wray said Wednesday that Russia continues to use fake news, propaganda and covert operations to “spin up” Americans on both sides of hot-button issues to sow discord in the United States.

Wray stood behind the intelligence agencies’ assessment that Moscow meddled in the 2016 presidential election, dismissing Russian President Vladimir Putin’s claim that his country was not involved.

“He’s got his view. I can tell you what my view is,” Wray said at the opening event of the Aspen Security Forum in Colorado. “The intelligence community’s view has not changed. My view has not changed.”

Wray spoke after a day of controversy in Washington over whether President Donald Trump accepts the intelligence agencies’ assessment and whether he believes Moscow is continuing to

try to influence American elections or threaten the nation’s infrastructure.

Wray also dismissed Putin’s offer to allow the U.S. access to 12 Russian military in-

telligence officers who have been indicted on charges of interfering in the election in return for being able to interview Americans the Kremlin has accused of unspecified crimes.

The White House said it was under consideration. Wray dismissed the offer.

“I never want to say never about anything,” Wray said, “but it’s certainly not high on our list of investigative techniques.”

Much of the conversation with Wray, which was moderated by NBC’s Lester Holt, focused on Russia.

“Russia continues to engage in malign influence operations to this day,” Wray said.

He said that while U.S. officials have not yet seen an effort by Russia to target specific election systems, it is aggressively engaged in influence operations to sow discord and divisiveness in America. “To me, it’s a threat that we need to take very serious and respond to with fierce determination,” Wray said.

Russia isn’t the only country threatening the U.S., Wray said.

He said he thinks China, from a counterintelligence perspective, represents the broadest and most significant threat America faces.



President Donald Trump speaks during a meeting at the White House on Wednesday.

Amid fallout, Trump tries tougher tone on Russia

By ZEKE MILLER, KEN
THOMAS AND LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump spent a second day managing the political fallout from his widely criticized meeting with Russia’s Vladimir Putin, shifting stances and mopping up what the White House said were misstatements.

His toughness with the longtime American foe in question, Trump said Wednesday he told the Russian president face-to-face during Monday’s summit to stay out of America’s elections “and that’s the way it’s going to be.”

That rhetoric marked a turn-about from Trump’s first, upbeat description of his sit-down with Putin. Still, Trump backtracked on whether Russia is currently targeting U.S. elections. When asked the question Wednesday, he answered “no,” a reply that put him sharply at odds with recent public warnings from his own intelligence chief.

Hours later, the White House stepped in to say Trump’s answer wasn’t what it appeared.

The zigzagging laid bare the White House’s search for a path out of trouble that has dogged the administration’s discussions of Russia from the start but spiraled after Trump’s trip to Helsinki.

After days of criticism from both Democrats and Republicans, Trump — a politician who celebrates his brash political incorruptness — has appeared more sensitive than usual to outside

opprobrium.

The scale of the bipartisan outcry at Trump’s stance toward Putin has ruffled only by that after his 2017 wailing over condemning white supremacist demonstrators in Charlottesville, Va.

“I let him know we can’t have this,” Trump told CBS News of his conversations with Putin. “We’re not going to have it, and that’s the way it’s going to be.”

Would he hold Putin personally responsible for further election interference? “I would, because he’s in charge of the country.”

The CBS interview came at the end of two days of shifting statements.

On Monday, Trump appeared to question the findings of U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia interfered in the 2016 election. His reservations, expressed 18 months into his presidency and as he stood standing next to Putin on foreign soil, prompted blistering criticism at home, even from prominent fellow Republicans.

On Tuesday, he delivered a scripted statement to “clarify” his word — his remarks Monday. He said he misspoke by one word when he said he saw no reason to believe Russia had interfered in the 2016 U.S. election.

On Wednesday, he was asked during a Cabinet meeting if Russia was still targeting the U.S., and he answered “no” without elaborating. That came just days after National Intelligence Director Dan Coats sounded an alarm, comparing the cyberthreat today

to the way U.S. officials said before 9/11 that intelligence channels were “blinking red” with warning signs that a terrorist attack was imminent.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said later Wednesday that Trump actually was saying “no” to answering additional questions — even though he subsequently went on to address Russia.

“The president is wrong,” GOP Sen. Susan Collins, of Maine, said of Trump’s one-word response. Told that Sanders had since clarified, she responded: “There’s a walk-back of the walk-back of the walk-back of the walk-back? This is dizzying.”

Trump has refined and sharpened his presentation in the two days since Helsinki.

At the news conference with Putin, he was asked if he would denounce what happened in 2016 and warn Putin never to do it again, and he did not directly answer. Instead, he went into a rambling response, including demands for investigation of Hillary Clinton’s email server and his description of Putin’s “extremely strong and powerful” denial of meddling.

Trump asserted Wednesday at the White House that no other American president has been as tough on Russia. He cited U.S. sanctions and the expulsion of alleged Russian spies from the U.S., telling reporters that Putin “understands it, and he’s not happy about it.”

White House says Trump not taking Putin offer

By ZEKE MILLER, KEN
THOMAS AND LISA MASCARO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The White House said Thursday that President Donald Trump “disagrees” with Russian President Vladimir Putin’s offer to allow the U.S. to question 12 Russians accused of interfering in the 2016 election in exchange for permitting Russia to interview Americans the Kremlin accuses of unspecified crimes.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the proposal was “made in sincerity” by Putin, but Trump “disagrees with it.” She said the U.S. hopes Putin will have the Russians indicted on charges brought by the U.S. Department of Justice “come to the United States to prove their innocence or guilt.”

Putin made what Trump called an “incredible offer” during a joint press conference concluding their summit in Helsinki, for which Trump received bipartisan condemnation at home.

The White House had said Wednesday it was under consideration, even though the State Department called Russia’s allegations against the Americans “absurd.”

The Russian claims against the Americans, including former U.S. Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul, involve allegations of fraud and corruption. Congressional Republicans have criticized the White House for even considering the offer, while McFaul has called it a “ridiculous request from Putin.”

Pushing back against criticism of the Putin meeting, Trump said Thursday he wants another meeting with Putin to start implementing ideas they discussed in Helsinki, casting the summit as a starting point for progress on a number of shared concerns.

Trump also accused the news media of trying to provoke a confrontation with Moscow that could lead to war, although concerns about the meeting have been raised by a broad cross-section of Republicans and Democrats.

Trump tweeted a list of topics discussed at the summit, including terrorism, security for Israel, Middle East, Ukraine, North Korea and more, and wrote: “There are many answers, some easy and some hard, to these problems... but they can ALL be solved!”

“I look forward to our second meeting so that we can start implementing some of the many things discussed,” he wrote. Trump also met with Putin last year in Germany and Vietnam.

Numerous lawmakers have criticized Trump for his post-summit statements raising doubts about Russia’s interference in the 2016 U.S. elections, and past and current intelligence community officials also differed with many of his statements.

NATION



BRIAN WITTE/AP

‘I felt like I’d spent a career defending the principles and the freedoms of this country. And in just a few moments I watched a president hand over any semblance of pride or respect for what so many people like me in uniform have been fighting for and potentially been dying for over the last several decades.’

Aaron Axe
Marine veteran



BEN FINLEY/AP

‘I think he’s got a reason to be friends with Putin. And I think it’ll be to our advantage, just like with North Korea.’

James Flaskey
Army veteran



LORIN ELENI GILL/AP

‘All this backtracking is frustrating because we’ve seen with Trump that if a button gets pushed, he really doubles down and escalates things. If we do end up needing to support a conflict, what this means for some people in the military — these are life and death matters.’

Kim Samayoa
Navy veteran

Divided: Some vets don’t buy Trump’s shift in tone

FROM FRONT PAGE

he believed Putin. The president also declined to say whether he believed the U.S. intelligence community’s conclusion that Russia interfered.

Sheppard, 43, a self-described reluctant Democrat who became disenfranchised with the Republican Party during the Iraq War, said he couldn’t believe his ears.

“It’s like I’m watching somebody commit treason,” he said.

But former Marine Boe Bostjancic, 61, a Virginia Beach resident, said while he didn’t particularly care for Trump’s performance in Helsinki, the president was acting like the same politically incorrect leader he voted for and still supports.

“At least I can respect the fact that he was honest with us,” Bostjancic said.

Trump on Tuesday said he simply mispoke in Helsinki and accepted the conclusions by U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia was behind the election hacking,

but then on Wednesday he appeared to defend his original remarks.

Those who spoke with The Associated Press largely didn’t buy his change in tone — or said it didn’t matter.

James Flaskey, 74, a Norfolk, Va., veteran who served in the Army during the height of the Cold War, said the dynamic with Russia has changed over the years and because of that he trusts that Trump is doing the right thing, even if the end game isn’t exactly clear.

“I think he’s got a reason to be friends with Putin,” Flaskey said. “And I think it’ll be to our advantage, just like with North Korea.”

Kate Handley, a 22-year Navy veteran whose husband is still on active duty, vehemently disagrees.

“Just because the Soviet Union broke apart doesn’t mean they stopped being our enemy,” she said of Russia. “What has Russia done to advance the U.S.’ interest? They go against U.S. interests.”

Handley said Trump’s reluctance to fully support American intelligence agencies also undermines the U.S. military.

“He’s throwing the military under the bus when he throws the intelligence community under the bus,” said Handley. “Everything we do — every deployment — is based on a reason. And it’s often based on [information] the intelligence community has.”

Aron Axe, a combat-decorated Marine infantry officer with 25 years in uniform, feels anything but trust for his president after witnessing his performance in Helsinki.

“I felt like I’d spent a career defending the principles and the freedoms of this country,” said Axe, 44, who lives in Annapolis, Md. “And in just a few moments I watched a president hand over any semblance of pride or respect for what so many people like me in uniform have been fighting for and potentially been dying for over the last several decades.”

Axe, who retired in 2016 and recently made an unsuccessful bid in a Democratic primary for a Maryland state House seat, said the issue has little to do with political party and “everything to do with the person who is in the office of commander in chief.”

Kim Samayoa, a research operations manager at a biotech firm in South San Francisco who served as a hospital corpsman in the Navy for three years, said Trump’s words and actions make her and her active-duty friends nervous.

“All this backtracking is frustrating because we’ve seen with Trump that if a button gets pushed, he really doubles down and escalates things,” the 41-year-old mother of two said.

“If we do end up needing to support a conflict, what this means for some people in the military — these are life and death matters.”

Associated Press Writer Brian Witte in Annapolis, Md., contributed to this report.

Dems struggle over using term ‘treason’ regarding Trump

By LAURIE KELLMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Democrats are happy to say President Donald Trump undermined American democracy. That he patted Vladimir Putin on the back for interfering in U.S. elections. That he’s being blackmailled by Russia.

But that he committed treason? That’s too far for some leading Democrats worried about sending the wrong message during an election year.

“The bottom line is, different people will characterize it differently,” Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer told reporters this week of Trump’s conduct toward Russia. He slammed Trump in every way but that one, accusing him of weakness

and lame and contradictory walk-backs. “President Trump undercut our intelligence, elevated a brutal dictator who’s taking advantage of the United States. And maybe, most importantly, refused to confront President Putin.”

A debate has raged in Democratic circles this week over how strongly to condemn Trump’s comments in Helsinki, where, standing by Putin’s side, the U.S. president refused to say he believed American intelligence over Putin’s denials about Russian election interference. Trump later sought to walk back his stance, saying he mispoke using a double negative.

There was a burst of condemnation in the 48 hours after Trump’s performance that elevated the discussion of “treason” by a president to a level not seen in generations.

Former CIA Director John Brennan, who has worked in both Democratic and Republican administrations, quickly tweeted that Trump’s conduct in Helsinki was “nothing short of treasonous.” Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman, D-N.J., used #TreasonSummit in her post about the meeting. Protesters gathered in front of the White House on Tuesday chanted, “Traitor! Traitor! Traitor!”

But Democratic leaders, along with some activists and strategists, warn that such rhetoric could backfire.

Trump responded Wednesday by casting his critics as victims of “Trump Derangement Syndrome,” a term coined to describe a fury so deep it renders the afflicted blind to the president’s accomplishments. It’s a theme he’s set out before, when he labeled critical comments by Democratic women

“crazy rants” and other unflattering analysis as “hysterical.” And it’s designed to undermine the Democrats’ midterm election argument that they can govern more steadily than the Republican majorities of the House and Senate.

The legal definition of treason is providing “aid and comfort” to enemies of the U.S. in a high crime. If Democrats align behind the term, it raises the question of what they plan to do about it. The party, according to two congressional aides who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss strategy, doesn’t have an answer.

The language also risks alienating swing voters who don’t appreciate over-the-top rhetoric. After all, treason is a crime so serious that the convicted can be executed.

NATION

LGBT advocates fear Kavanaugh's votes on gay rights

By MARK SHERMAN
AND JENNIFER PELTZ
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Gay-rights supporters who thronged the Supreme Court plaza after justices declared same-sex marriage a constitutional right expect to have little to celebrate if Brett Kavanaugh replaces Justice Anthony Kennedy, the author of all the court's major gay-rights rulings.

None of Kavanaugh's roughly 300 opinions as an appellate judge deals directly with LGBT issues, but his approach to judging leads some scholars and activists to believe he is unlikely to echo Kennedy's votes.

Still, they said Kavanaugh might be reluctant to overrule the landmark 2015 same-sex marriage decision, even if he might have voted against it in the first instance.

While LGBT advocates sound alarms about Kavanaugh, opponents of same-sex marriage are applauding his nomination, though not necessarily focusing on its potential impact on gay rights.

The Family Research Council, a major Christian conservative advocacy group, lauded Kavanaugh's rulings on religious freedom and "long and praiseworthy history of judging as an originalist," a term that means interpreting the Constitution as it was understood when written. The council describes homosexuality as "unnatural" and "harmful."

The high court is likely to confront a range of LGBT issues, perhaps as early as the coming term. These could include President Donald Trump's ban on transgender people in the military and whether federal civil rights laws banning discrimination in the workplace and education cover sexual orientation and gender identity. The justices also might be asked to decide an issue they passed over last term: whether businesses can invoke religious objections to refuse service to gay people.

At Kavanaugh's 2006 confirmation hearing for his current post

as an appellate judge — before the Supreme Court ruling that legalized same-sex marriage nationwide — he was asked whether he had a view on the definition of marriage and whether courts or legislatures should establish it. Kavanaugh didn't say, instead responding to a part of the question about judicial restraint.

"Throughout our history, we've seen that some of the worst moments in the Supreme Court history have been moments of judicial activism, where courts have imposed their own policy preferences" instead of interpreting the law, he said.

With sparse evidence about Kavanaugh's views on LGBT matters, observers are parsing his record for clues to how he might vote.

"I think there's very little mystery about how he is likely to view those issues," said Shannon Minter, of the National Center for Lesbian Rights. "He has an extremely conservative judicial record, and it's highly likely he would be a consistently negative vote on any issue affecting LGBT people."

Dale Carpenter, an expert on LGBT issues at Southern Methodist University, said he considers Kavanaugh a careful and thoughtful judge. "I don't think he is going to be a knee-jerk judge in any direction, and I don't think he is anti-LGBT," Carpenter said.

Carpenter said Kavanaugh also is "a judicial conservative and he's a textualist," who probably would be hesitant to expand the reach of civil rights laws that do not specifically mention sexual orientation or gender identity. Federal appeals courts in Chicago and New York recently have ruled that bias against gay people is sex discrimination under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

"He might see it as a very aggressive judicial decision to expand what have been seen to be the limits of Title VII protection, absent congressional action. But it's not unthinkable," Carpenter said.



PHOTOS BY JOHN RAOUX/AP

The exterior of the home of Lubomir Jastrzebski and Nancy Nemhauser is seen Wednesday in Mount Dora, Fla.

'Starry Night' can remain on Fla. home; mayor to apologize

Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — A Florida mayor must apologize to a couple fined thousands of dollars for having their home's exterior painted to emulate a Vincent van Gogh masterpiece.

The Orlando Sentinel reported the Mount Dora City Council unanimously agreed Tuesday that Lubomir Jastrzebski and Nancy Nemhauser can keep the blue-and-yellow murals swirled on their walls in the style of van Gogh's painting "The Starry Night."

The settlement agreement also says the city must pay them \$15,000 and move to remove a property lien to end the nearly year-long code enforcement case.

Mayor Nick Girone reportedly planned a public apology Wednesday at city hall.

"We are absolutely delighted and ecstatic," Nemhauser said after the vote. "I'm unhappy that we had to go through all of this, but the ending is a happy ending."

Artist Richard Barrenechea, who painted the murals, agreed.

"It's a big day for the arts," Barrenechea said. "It's a big day for Mount Dora and a big day for freedom."

Mount Dora, about 25 miles northwest of Orlando, is known



Jastrzebski and Nemhauser stand by a section of a mural at their home Wednesday.

to welcome artists and hosts one of the largest art shows in central Florida.

The dispute began when the couple painted an exterior wall as a way to calm their 25-year-old son, who is autistic and loves van Gogh's work.

Code enforcement officers cited the couple in July 2017, saying the murals violated Mount Dora's sign ordinance and the house must be painted a solid color. The city also argued the bright colors distracted drivers.

The couple then had the rest of their home painted like van Gogh's painting, attracting national attention.

The council also voted to create a seven-member advisory committee for implementing new ordinances or codes, and invited Nemhauser to be a member.

The "Starry Night" house will be exempt from any current or future ordinances so long as it keeps the murals. If they repaint, the homeowners lose their exemption.

Hawaii searches for safe spots for people to see lava

By AUDREY McAVOY
Associated Press

HONOLULU — Stunning images of Hawaii's erupting Kilauea volcano have captivated people around the world. But it's nearly impossible for residents and visitors on the ground to see the lava — a fact that's squeezing the tourism-dependent local economy.

Authorities on the Big Island want to set up a lava-viewing site to help, but they're finding it difficult to do while keeping peo-

ple safe.

The risks posed by the volcano came into sharp focus this week when lava flowing into the ocean triggered an explosion that sent a hot rock the size of a basketball crashing through the roof of a tour boat. One woman's leg was broken, while nearly two dozen others suffered minor burns and scrapes.

Diane Ley, Hawaii County's director of research and development, said she's been working on setting up a lava-viewing site for nearly two months, consulting with

federal scientists and the county's civil defense administrator. The injuries from the tour boat only validate the county's caution, she said.

"That's a challenge — to find us a site that is safe from volcanic hazards, emissions, and can afford the ability for large numbers to be able to come in and view," she said.

Still, pressures are mounting from businesses on the Big Island, where Kilauea is a major draw. Tourism to parts of the island has plummeted since the volcano

began erupting in a residential neighborhood and burning down homes in May.

Currently, only helicopter and boat tours passengers — paying about \$250 each — are able to see the lava in person.

The area where lava is bursting from the ground is under a mandatory evacuation order. Residents nearby may go to their homes, but the county restricts access for everyone else except scientists, authorities like the National Guard and a handful of escorted media.

NATION

Man dies trying to restrain blaze

By GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — A tractor operator who was killed in a wildfire that scorched 70 square miles in a little more than 24 hours in the Pacific Northwest appears to have been dying trying to restrain it, police said.

The blaze about 80 miles east of Portland, Ore., and near the city of The Dalles started Tuesday and spread into a rural farming area with vast wheat fields.

Authorities found one person dead Wednesday near a burned-out tractor. The person was likely trying to use the heavy farm machinery to create a fire break to hold back flames, the Wasco County Sheriff's Office said.

Dozens of homes have been evacuated because of the conflagration.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown declared a state of emergency Wednesday, marking the unofficial start to a Pacific Northwest Fire season that's expected to be worse than normal.

Firefighters crept into the fields in water trucks and attempted to douse the leading edges of the fire from behind as it burned through acres of wheat, with everything behind the flames charred black.

The news of the fatality also came as authorities on Wednesday ordered additional mandatory evacuations in the small communities of Moro and Grass Valley and closed U.S. Route 97 in that area. Grass Valley's evacuation was eased Wednesday night as firefighters focused on saving structures in that area. Substation fire spokesman Stefan Myers said.

Oregon's fires come as other states across the American West, including California and Colorado, have struggled with massive blazes that have torn through



A Cal Fire firefighter looks at the charred landscape while fighting a 4-6 acre vegetation fire in Grass Valley, Calif., on Wednesday.

ELIAS FUNEZ, THE (GRASS VALLEY, CALIF.) UNION/AP

land gripped by drought.

"In Oregon, very low humidity, high temperatures and winds gusting up to 30 mph made the flames explosive in thin grasses and wheat fields," said Robin De-

Mario, a spokeswoman for the Northwest Interagency Coordination Center.

"These light fuels go up very quickly," DeMario said. "The grassy stalks are very dry, they

have lost the moisture in those stalks, and so if a fire start begins we call it 'flashy fuels' because it burns very fast and very hot."

The Columbia River Gorge separating Oregon and Washington is still recovering from a wildfire last year that scorched 75 square miles, ravaged popular hiking trails and marred vistas.

It burned in the western end of that's home to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, which attracts more than 3 million tourists a year and holds North America's largest concentration of waterfalls.

The landscape to the east along the river transitions to grasslands and flat, open vistas dotted with wheat fields — where the fire burned Wednesday.

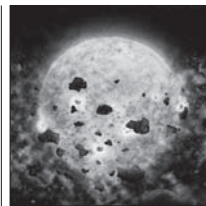
Elsewhere in the state, several fires started by lightning over the weekend burned as temperatures flirted with triple digits.

One fire in southern Oregon forced the evacuation of two houses, and 33 more homeowners prepared to flee Wednesday after the flames spread near the California border.

Another blaze about 200 miles east of Portland was tamped down after farmers and ranchers used their heavy equipment to help create lines to contain the flames. Some fences and horse corrals burned, but no homes were lost, said Melissa Ross, Morrow County Sheriff's Office spokeswoman.

Elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest, a small fire near Spokane Valley, Washington, prompted evacuation notices for 700 homes Tuesday night. Most were able to return home Wednesday.

In California, a deadly forest fire was spreading west of Yosemite National Park, keeping a key route into the park shut down during tourist season.



M. WEISS, CXC, NASA /AP

This illustration provided by NASA depicts debris surrounding the star RW Aur A, about 450 light-years away from the Earth.

Astronomers: Star may be eating planet

By SEITH BORENSTEIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Astronomers may have caught a relatively nearby star munching on a planet or mini-planets.

A NASA space telescope noticed that the star suddenly started looking a bit strange last year. The Chandra X-Ray Observatory spotted a 30-fold increase in iron on the edge of the star, which is only 10 million years old, along with pronounced dimming.

Astronomers have been watching the baby star — in the constellation Taurus — for decades, and iron levels weren't high in 1915 the last time the Chandra telescope looked at it. The star, called RW Aur A, is 450 light-years away. A light-year is 5.9 trillion miles.

Hans Moritz Guenther, a scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, said he's never seen anything quite like this before, calling it "a lot stranger than we thought we'd be seeing."

"We've never seen any star that's changed its iron abundance like that," he said.

Guenther said one potential simple explanation is that the star is eating a planet or mini-planets. He looked at other possible explanations, and of the two that make sense, he prefers the planet-munching one. Computer simulations show it can happen, but it has never been seen before, he said.

Outside experts are wary. "This could be an exciting discovery, but the evidence is circumstantial and not definitive," said Harvard's Avi Loeb.

Zuckerberg clarifies policy on posts denying Holocaust

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is clarifying his stance pertaining to Holocaust deniers after getting some blowback on social media.

Speaking with Recode's Kara Swisher, Zuckerberg, who is Jewish, said in an interview published Wednesday that Facebook posts denying the Holocaust took place would not be removed automati-

cally. Zuckerberg said he thinks that there are things "that different people get wrong," and that he doesn't think they are "intentionally" getting it wrong.

Swisher cut in and said that in the case of Holocaust deniers, it may be intentionally wrong.

Zuckerberg responded by saying that "It's hard to impugn intent and to understand the intent."

The portion of the interview was about hate speech and its

potential impact in regions of strife. After his comments led to an outcry online, Zuckerberg sent an email to Swisher attempting to expand on what he had said.

"There's one thing I want to clear up. I personally find Holocaust denial deeply offensive, and I absolutely didn't intend to defend the intent of people who deny that," Zuckerberg wrote in the email, which was published by Recode.

The goal of Facebook is not to prevent someone from saying something untrue," Zuckerberg said, but to stop fake news from spreading across the social network.

If something is deemed to be fake, he said, it might remain on the site but it would be pushed down in the news feed so fewer people would see it.

The earlier comments landed with a thud online.

she told police.

Jones' mother began CPR at the instruction of a dispatcher after they called 911, the affidavit said.

Police arrived at the home in New Britain, about 35 miles north of Philadelphia, to find the baby in cardiac arrest. He was taken by ambulance to a hospital, where he died.

The affidavit stated that Jones said she

a combination of methadone, amphetamine and methamphetamine, the Bucks County District Attorney's office said in a statement.

According to an affidavit, Jones told police she'd been too tired to make the baby a bottle when he awoke crying at 3 a.m. and instead breastfed him.

A few hours later, the baby was pale and had bloody mucus coming from his nose,

primarily had been breastfeeding the baby but switched to formula a few days before the baby's death, saying the infant wasn't getting enough milk.

Jones told police that she had been prescribed methadone because of an addiction to painkillers, that she had taken it during her pregnancy, and that she was taking it at the time of the baby's death, the affidavit said.

Pa. mother is accused of killing her baby with drug-laced breast milk

Associated Press

DOYLESTOWN, Pa. — A 30-year-old woman with a painkiller addiction has been accused of killing her 11-week-old son with a lethal mix of drugs in her breast milk. Samantha Jones was charged July 13 with criminal homicide in the April 2 death of her baby.

An autopsy found the baby died from

NATION

Airlines shrink lavatories to add seats

By MARY SCHLANGENSTEIN

Bloomberg

If the restroom on your next flight seems a bit snug, don't assume you've picked up a few pounds. U.S. airlines increasingly are putting smaller lavatories on their planes — and the economics of the decision means they're probably here to stay.

As labor costs rise and fuel prices surge, airlines are taking advantage of robust travel demand to squeeze as many passengers as possible into planes. Knee-bashing reductions to legroom and elbow-crunching cuts to seat size are well-known tactics. The latest method is to retrofit old aircraft and order new ones with svelte lavatories that allow for an extra row of seats.

Airlines say the new restrooms are just a few inches smaller than what passengers are used to. But it's not like the bathrooms were that big to begin with, and the tighter fit is sparking complaints from pilots, concerns from flight attendants and griping from travelers.

Consultant Samuel Engel said taking his 4-year-old son to the restroom during a recent four-hour flight was like a yoga exercise.

"We're both compact people, but I still had basically straddle him to be able to fit in the toilet together," said Engel, who leads the aviation group at consulting firm ICF. "The sink is so tiny that we did a sort of four-handed ballet to wash each of our hands in turn, splashing water all over in the process."

The experience could be duplicated on just about any U.S. carrier.

American Airlines is using a smaller lavatory supplied by Airbus on new A321neos and remodeled older A321s to squeeze in more seats. The airline also is putting in diminutive restrooms made by Rockwell Collins on more than 300 Boeing 737 aircraft.

United Continental has the Rockwell lavatories on about 10 percent of its 737 fleet — almost 35 planes — and will use them on at least 155 more 737 Max jets,



KRISTIAN BOCKS/Bloomberg

A restroom door stands open inside a new Airbus A320neo cabin at the Aircraft Interiors Expo in Hamburg, Germany, on April 11.

Boeing's upgraded model of the single-aisle workhorse. Delta Air Lines has used the washrooms since 2014. JetBlue Airways Corp., meanwhile, is outfitting some of its fleet with a small lavatory made by Saffran's Zodiac Aerospace.

Gary Weissel, managing director of Tronox Aviation Consulting Inc., estimated that American could generate about \$400,000 a year for each seat it adds to a plane, based on average fares and typical aircraft usage.

The airline told investors last fall that adding seats to its Boeing 737-800 and Airbus A321 jets would bring in \$500 million a year. JetBlue has estimated that boosting capacity on its A320s by 12 seats to 162 will increase annual revenue by about \$100 million.

"Even with passenger complaints on these lavs, I don't see airlines pulling them out," Weissel said. "The revenue generated from being able to get an additional row of seats in there is too great."

At shoulder height, the width of Rockwell's Advanced Spacecraft restroom — made by the company's B/E Aerospace unit — is

about the same as older economy-class restrooms. The space savings comes around sink level, as the wall curves in to allow a row of three seats to be tucked under the bend. The lavatory, which is just one available option, provides 7 inches more of cabin space, according to a Rockwell spokesman. The company and several airlines declined to provide full dimensions.

The smaller restrooms going on American's 100 new 737 Max aircraft have prompted employees to dub it the Mini. Almost 250 older 737-800s also will be retrofitted with the petite washroom.

The economy cabin on American's Max 8 is "the most miserable experience in the world," Jimmy Walton, a captain for the airline, told company President Robert Ison during an employee meeting. "You've added 12 more seats, no more lavatories and you've shrunk that lavatory to 75 percent of what it was before," Walton said. "I can't turn around in it."

Flight attendants, who are on the front lines for traveler dissat-

isfaction, also criticize the smaller restrooms.

"We believe these lavatories contribute greatly to the general decline of the in-flight experience and have the potential to lead to increased incidents of air rage," said Shane Staples, a spokesman for the Association of Professional Flight Attendants at American.

The lavatories are about 22.4 inches across at a passenger's chest level when seated, American said. That's 3.1 inches narrower than the previous models.

"You're talking inches. We're not talking feet," said David Seymour, American's senior vice president of integrated operations. "I don't know how big of a population falls into 'I can't move around in it.'"

To passengers already losing space bit by bit, however, trimming a few more inches can be a big deal.

Airlines "have decided the lavatory doesn't matter that much" as they try to squeeze in more seats, said Jami Counter, vice president of flights at the TripAdvisor and SeatGuru.com air-travel sites. "I

think they might have gone a bit too far. They're taking it off of what already was a very skinny configuration."

United Airlines' first Boeing 737 Max 9 flights on June 7 spurred complaints on Twitter about the small restroom. Zach Honig, an editor-at-large for The Points Guy, a travel tips site, tweeted that the economy class bathrooms on the plane "are shockingly bad" and "especially narrow."

The airline's 737s offer two or three different size lavatories, including one in the premium cabin, said United spokeswoman Maddie King. "The washroom at the front of the plane often is larger — but typically isn't available to economy passengers."

JetBlue's planes have at least one full-size lavatory at the front that can be used by any passenger, said spokesman Doug McGraw.

"The aircraft has a finite amount of space," he said. "It's not without challenges, but customer feedback on all the upgrades we are making to our interiors has been very good."

Rockwell said that as trends in travel and fares change, it offers various restrooms to help carriers adapt.

"These range from large lavatories to space-saving lavatories, which allow airlines to optimize the cabin," said spokeswoman Pam Turley. "Legacy Zodiac, which makes the JetBlue restroom, didn't respond to requests for comment."

Boeing offers lavatories with added interior space as well as ones that allow carriers to increase room in the cabin.

"Our goal is to provide the most flexibility to our airline customers to meet their individual business needs," spokesman Doug Alder said by email.

Carriers may be forced to give at some point, said Engel, the ICF consultant.

"A few videos of people changing diapers in the aisle or a larger American stuck in the lav," he said, ultimately may generate pressure for a new generation of lavatories "with less of the squeeze."

San Francisco to consider tax on companies to help homeless

By JANIE HAR

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — San Francisco voters will decide in November whether to tax large businesses to pay for homeless and housing services, an issue that set off a battle in another West Coast city struggling with income inequality.

The city elections department verified Monday that supporters had collected enough signatures to get the measure on the ballot. It would raise about \$300 million a year — doubling what San Francisco spends on homelessness — for more shelter beds and housing for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming so.

The money would come from an average hotel occupancy tax increase on companies' revenue above \$50 million each year.

Homelessness is a major problem in San Francisco, as well as other cities on the West Coast with growing numbers of high-paying tech jobs that price lower-income residents out of a shrinking housing supply. San Francisco's new mayor, London Breed, vowed to clear the streets of its tent camps within a year of taking office.

"I think the city is really ready for this," said Christin Evans, a San Francisco small-business owner and one of three petitioners on the measure. "We have a lot of momentum behind us, and more than a majority of the voting population is renters. We're polling very well."

Seattle leaders last month repealed a tax on large employers that was meant to fund homelessness services after Amazon pushed back.

But south of San Francisco, Mountain View's City Council got a measure on the November ballot asking voters to authorize a tax on Google and other companies with employees in the Silicon Valley city.

It's unclear which companies in San Francisco would be affected and how hard by the additional tax on gross receipts. Jim Lazarus, senior vice president of public policy for the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, estimates up to 1,000 businesses generate more than \$50 million a year.

The companies could include Twitter, which declined to comment Monday. Other companies that could be affected, such as Uber, pharmaceutical distributor McKesson Corp., Google, Apple and Amazon did not respond to requests for comment.

Other businesses that could be affected

include department stores, supermarkets, law firms and clothing makers such as Levi Strauss & Co., Lazarus said. The chamber will likely oppose the measure.

Marc Benioff, founder and chief executive of cloud-computing company Salesforce, has urged others in the tech community to help address the city's problems with homelessness.

The city's largest tech employer said in a statement that it has given more than \$4 million to the cause and that it is "evaluating the potential ballot measure to carefully assess its merits in addressing this important issue."

San Francisco voters last month also approved an increase in the gross receipts tax on commercial buildings and warehouses to fund universal child care.

NATION

Should officers be shooting through their windshields?

By PATRICK MARTIN
The Washington Post

"Watch out! Shots fired!" Officer William Umana shouted through his radio to his fellow Las Vegas police officers pursuing a black SUV containing two shooting suspects.

Police later said Fidel Miranda and Rene Nunez fired 34 rounds at officers in Las Vegas on July 11. Officers pursued the pair after they shot a man at a car wash.

As the pursuit moved off a thoroughfare and onto a residential street, Umana powered down his window. He pointed his pistol at the suspects' vehicle with his left hand for a moment, but then switched the pistol to his right hand before firing five shots through his windshield.

Umana then fired six more shots with both hands. After he fired a third volley of shots through his window, the suspects' vehicle crashed into an elementary school. One suspect was killed and the other arrested.

This is not the first time an officer has been recorded on video shooting through their own windshield.

In April, Louisville, Ky., police officer Nicolai Jilek fired five rounds through the windshield of his police vehicle at a suspected armed robber.

"They're trying to train us to shoot through our windshield if we need to," Jilek told the Courier Journal. "If you can, you want to return fire from the car as quick as possible."

Officers Umana and Jilek fired while driving their vehicles, a rather difficult technique.

"When you're driving, drive; when you're shooting, shoot," firearms and deadly force instructor Massad Ayoob told The Washington Post.

"We are taught to not fire from or at a moving vehicle as a general rule," he said, but Ayoob noted that officers are required to shoot at a suspect if they believe innocent people are at risk.

There is also risk of injury to officers who shoot through their windshields. Firing in the enclosed space of a vehicle could cause hearing damage, and windshield fragments could hit the officer. Some departments have policies prohibiting firing from moving vehicles.

"There's always the possibility of glass coming back at you, but in that situation, glass is better than bullets," Ayoob said.

Despite their high velocity, bullets passing through any type of material could be deflected.

"A lot of people don't even realize that the trajectory of the bullet will change," law enforcement firearms instructor Fred Mastison told The Post. Mastison trains officers in a variety of firearms skills.

"There may be a thousand reasons why they would shoot

through glass, but it's by no means optimal," Mastison said. The angle of the windshield, the caliber and type of round fired, and the distance to the target must all be considered when shooting through glass.

Upon striking an angled windshield, a bullet will be deflected, Mastison said. The round will deflect high if it is fired from inside the car, and it will deflect low if it is fired from outside the car. Most modern bullets consist of a lead core and a metal jacket or shell. Bullets are designed to travel through air with minimal resistance, but Mastison noted

that bullets deform after hitting a windshield.

"It's no longer a well-shaped round. It's a jagged piece of metal," Mastison said.

Mastison said he has worked with some law enforcement agencies in Indiana that train their officers to shoot through the same type of windshields that are installed in their police vehicles. Despite the complexities involved, Mastison said the officers he trains are able to engage targets through windshields after practice. He said a reliable skill level can be achieved after "a couple hundred rounds."



PATRICK MARTIN/The Washington Post

Las Vegas police officer William Umana shot through his windshield on July 11 while pursuing two shooting suspects. He's not the first officer to use this technique.



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WORLD



People look at the carcasses of crocodiles slaughtered by villagers in Sorong, West Papua, Indonesia, on Saturday.

Mob in Indonesia kills hundreds of crocodiles

Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia — A mob slaughtered nearly 300 crocodiles at a breeding ground in Indonesia's West Papua province in retaliation for the death of a local man, officials said Monday.

A total of 292 crocodiles were killed by hundreds of villagers on Saturday following the funeral of a 48-year-old man who was killed by crocodiles after entering the area around the breeding pond, said Basar Manullang, the head of the local Natural Resources and Conservation Agency.

The man was believed to have entered the sanctuary in the Klamalu neighborhood of Sorong district to cut grass for his cattle.

"Since killing the crocodiles is

illegal, we are coordinating with the police for the investigation," Manullang said.

The agency said in a statement that the villagers were armed with machetes, hammers, shovels and other sharp weapons. They killed two large crocodiles of up to 13 feet and many babies measuring 20-60 inches.

Witnesses said about 40 policemen came to the scene but were too outnumbered to stop the mob.

Police said about five witnesses have been questioned but no suspects have been named.

Police are encouraging mediation between the victim's family and Mitra Lestari Abadi, the company that operates the sanctuary.

Radio Free Europe to resume service in Romania, Bulgaria

Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania — Radio Free Europe said Thursday that it will resume news services in Romania and Bulgaria in a bid to debunk fake news and combat poor-quality journalism.

The U.S. Congress-funded station will return to the two southeastern European countries, both European Union and NATO members, starting in December.

Radio Free Europe president Thomas Kent said in a statement that he hoped the move would "help the growth of a free press, promote democratic values and

institutions, and inform discussion in both countries of their place in NATO, the EU and other Western organizations."

The statement also said that "government officials, civil society representatives and journalists... have expressed concern that disinformation, corruption, and social division are undermining their political systems."

RFE's Bulgarian service ended in 2004 while the service to Romania stopped in 2008. The statement noted that the media situation had deteriorated since the two countries joined the EU in 2007.

UN envoy cites risks from lack of cooling

UNITED NATIONS — New data from 52 countries in hot climates reveal that more than 1.1 billion people face "significant risks" from lack of access to cooling including death, a U.N. envoy said Monday.

Rachel Kyte told a press conference that "millions of people die every year from lack of cooling

access, whether from food losses, damaged vaccines or severe heat impact."

The U.N. envoy, who is promoting the United Nations goal of providing sustainable energy for all people by 2030, said nine countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America with the biggest populations that face major risks are Bangladesh, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan and Sudan.

From The Associated Press

Macron bodyguard is seen beating protester in video

Associated Press

PARIS — A video showing one of French President Emmanuel Macron's security chiefs beating a student demonstrator in May, until now cloaked in secrecy, is drawing a fierce public backlash over what is seen as mild punishment — a two-week suspension and a change in responsibilities.

The growing uproar forced Macron's spokesman to address the issue Thursday, more than 2½ months after the event. Condemning the "unacceptable behavior," Bruno Roger-Petit said that Alexandre Benalla was removed from his responsibilities of organizing security for presidential trips — though he maintains his office at the Elysee Palace.

Authorities have launched a preliminary investigation that could lead to charges against Benalla, a judicial official said on condition of anonymity because

he wasn't authorized to discuss an ongoing case.

Roger-Petit said the punishment dealt out to Benalla was the "most serious" ever given to a security director at the presidential Elysee Palace and served as a "last warning before dismissal."

The video of the May 1 event in Paris, revealed by the newspaper Le Monde on Wednesday evening, shows Benalla in a helmet with police markings and surrounded by riot police, brutally dragging off a woman from a demonstration and then repeatedly beating a young man on the ground. The man is heard begging him to stop. Police, who had hauled the man from the crowd before Benalla took over, didn't intervene. Benalla then left the scene.

Opposition politicians expressed shock, with some denouncing a climate of impunity at the top of the French political hierarchy and asking Macron to personally address the issue.

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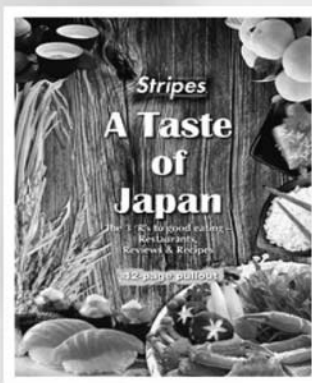
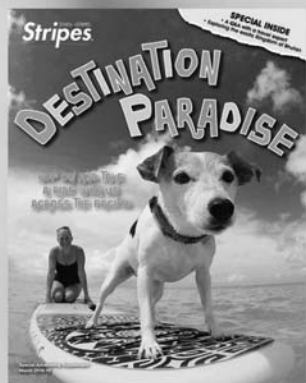


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AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Trapped tourists call wrong Lisbon police

ME LISBON — Two tourists who became trapped in an elevator accidentally called the wrong Lisbon police department for help. Dispatcher Cathy Roy told WCHS-TV on Tuesday she was working at the Lisbon Police Department in Maine a few weeks ago when she received a call from the trapped tourists. The only problem was they were in Lisbon, Portugal.

Roy said the two women had pressed the elevators' emergency button for help. No one answered, so the women searched online for "Lisbon Police" and called the first number listed.

Roy says she stayed on the phone with the women and found the right Lisbon police department to call.

Police: Woman faked terminal illness

NJ EGG HARBOR — Police arrested a New Jersey woman who they say faked having a terminal illness and persuaded a family to take care of her for more than a month.

Authorities said Tuesday that Kiley White, 26, of Galloway was charged July 12 with theft by deception and harassment after staying with an Egg Harbor Township family for five weeks.

Linda Evans told WCAU-TV her family cared for White, and "every day was just like she has one more day to live."

Police said White pulled a similar scheme in Pennsylvania, but she was never charged with a crime.

Woman finds deadly spider in store's grapes

CT BRANFORD — A Connecticut woman said she found a black widow spider in a package of grapes from the grocery store.

The woman said she bought the grapes from a Stop & Shop in Branford on Monday morning, and she and her 11-year-old son were eating the grapes together when they found the spider.

The woman said the venomous spider didn't bite, and the store offered her a full refund. She declined to give her name.

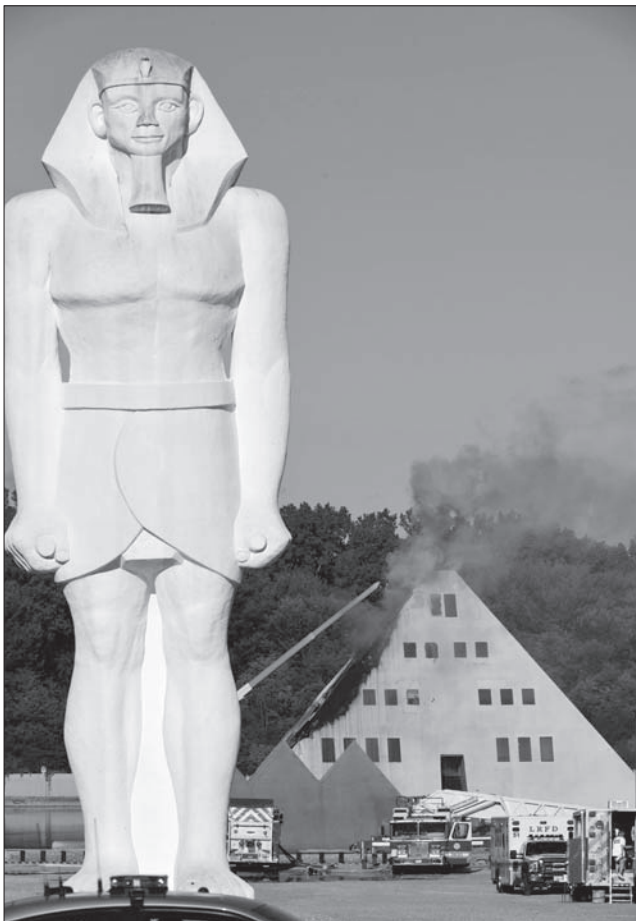
Cops: Drunken ice cream truck driver crashes

VA VIRGINIA BEACH — Authorities said a woman drunkenly crashed an ice cream truck into a car, injuring three people on National Ice Cream Day.

News outlets reported Ellaine Durham, 35, was charged with driving while intoxicated and three counts of hit-and-run for the Sunday crash.

Virginia Beach Police said Durham was driving the truck through the area around 6:30 p.m. when she hit a car and injured the car's occupants.

The three crash victims were taken to a hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.



JOE LEONARD, (ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, ILL.) DAILY HERALD/AP

Tourist attraction damaged

Firefighters work Tuesday to extinguish a fire at the Golden Pyramid House, a home that doubles as a tourist attraction in Wadsworth, Ill. Firefighters responded to a report that an elderly man in a wheelchair and his dog were trapped by the fire. No people were hurt but the dog died. The Gold Pyramid House was built in 1977 as a private residence but has since opened for public tours. A 55-foot-tall statue of Ramses II stands outside. The 17,000-square-foot, six-story structure about 45 miles north of Chicago is surrounded by a moat and contains a replica of King Tut's tomb.

Twins run for seats as political opponents

MI KENTWOOD — Twin sisters from western Michigan are running for county commissioner seats, but they aren't endorsing one another.

Monica Sparks is running as a Democrat for Kent County's 12th district seat while her Republican sister, Jessica Ann Tyson, hopes to represent the 13th district.

Tyson's decision to run inspired her sister to launch her own campaign. The sisters say they don't clash

on the issues but that they'll remain loyal to their parties and endorse each other's opponents.

They told WXMI-TV that they were adopted into a family that taught them to be civically engaged.

Board rejects mountain name change proposal

VT MONTPELIER — A Vermont state board has unanimously rejected a man's request to change the name of Mount Ascutney to the original Abenaki name.

The board voted 5-0 Monday against the petition because of the overwhelming opposition to the name change.

Hartland resident Rob Hutchins said the name Ascutney was made up by settlers and the original name of the summit was Kaskadenak, which means "wide mountain" in the Abenaki language.

The State of Vermont Board of Libraries is responsible for geographic naming in Vermont. On Monday, it also approved naming a mountain in Johnson Mount Emery after a family that has long lived on the land.

THE CENSUS



2 The number of times people at a popular South Carolina beach were ordered out of the water in one day because of shark sightings. The

Island Packet of Hilton Head reported that lifeguards told swimmers to get out of the ocean twice Tuesday. Mike Wagner, with Shore Beach Services, said there are frequent shark sightings at Hilton Head Island but there's no reason to be alarmed. There have been no fatal shark attacks in South Carolina in more than 50 years.

Woman suffers injuries in bear encounter

NH GROTON — New Hampshire's Fish and Game Department said a 71-year-old woman suffered serious head injuries from an encounter with a bear in her home.

The department said the bear somehow got inside the woman's home about 1:15 a.m. Tuesday in Groton. The woman, who uses a wheelchair, was hospitalized.

WMUR-TV reported evidence suggests the bear was trapped in the kitchen area before its encounter with the woman. The bear managed to get out of the home afterward.

Bicyclist falls into gap on lift bridge

WI MENASHA — Police said a bicyclist who weaved past the gates blocking access to a bridge over a river in eastern Wisconsin escaped serious injury after falling into the gap that was created when the bridge started to rise.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation surveillance video shot July 4 shows the woman ignoring the barrier and red flashing lights at the bridge.

The woman and her bike then drop into the gap and she disappears. Police said the 37-year-old woman was treated for facial injuries.

2 boys blamed for trolley museum damage

IL SOUTH ELGIN — Authorities said two boys ages 11 and 13 are responsible for more than \$100,000 in damage at the Fox River Trolley Museum in suburban Chicago.

The South Elgin museum said in a statement that dozens of windows were broken sometime between July 4 and July 7 and additional damage was done to eight cars. The museum said one car had 26 windows that were punched out by pick axes and spikes.

Jeff Bennett, the museum's chief car officer, said repair estimates vary from \$110,000 to \$150,000 and could increase. The boys are facing prosecution in Kane County Juvenile Court.

From wire reports

BUSINESS/WEATHER

EU fines Google record \$5B over mobile practices

By Raf Casert

Associated Press

BRUSSELS — The European Union fined Google a record \$5 billion Wednesday for forcing cellphone makers that use the company's hugely popular Android operating system to install Google apps.

The EU said the practice restricts competition and reduces choices for consumers.

The fine, which caps a three-year investigation, is the biggest ever imposed on a company by the EU for anticompetitive behavior.

It is likely to stoke tensions between Europe and the U.S., which regulates the tech industry with a lighter hand and has complained that the EU is singling out American companies for punishment.

Google immediately said it will appeal. Android has "created more choice for everyone, not less," Google CEO Sundar Pichai tweeted.

In its ruling, the EU said Google broke the rules when it required mobile phone makers to preinstall the Google Search and browser apps if they wanted to use Google's app store. Google also paid big producers to exclusively preinstall the Google Search app.

EU Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said "companies must compete on their merits," playing by rules that favor consumers and open markets, and not restrict competition.

Vestager said that given the size of the company, the fine is not disproportionate. The penalty is on top of a \$2.8 billion fine that regulators imposed on Google a year ago for favoring its shopping listings in search results.

The latest fine is well within Google's means. Its parent company, Alphabet, made \$9.4 billion in profit in the first three months of the year and reportedly had more than \$100 billion in cash reserves.

But the EU's insistence that Google change its practices could have a bigger impact than the fine.

"The important thing is not to be distracted by the size of the fine. What is important is that Google has to change its abusive behavior," Rich Stables, CEO of the rival search engine Kelloo, told The Associated Press.

Android is an open-source operating system that Google lets cellphone makers use for free. As a result, it is the most widely used system, beating even Apple's iOS. The EU says Google has market

share exceeding 90 percent in most European countries.

The EU wants to ensure that phone makers are free to preinstall apps of their choosing and to allow for competition in services such as internet searches. It also wants cellphone makers to be able to more easily use altered versions of Android.

Google argues that could hurt its ability to provide Android for free, as its main way of making money from the operating system is through advertising and the sale of content and apps. Its main rival in mobile systems, Apple, makes most of its money from the sale of devices.

Giving phone makers more freedom to use altered versions of Android also could hurt Google. Samsung, a hugely popular maker of Android devices through its Galaxy line, could break off and take much of the Android system with it.

If Google's business activities are too harshly constrained, the argument follows, it might no longer be able to provide Android for free to cellphone manufacturers.

Daniel Castro, vice president of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, a think tank in Washington, said the ruling "is a blow to innovative, open-

source business models."

The EU's clash with Google is reminiscent of the bloc's battle with Microsoft. In that case, the EU said Microsoft used the market dominance of its Windows operating system to lead consumers to use Microsoft's browser, Internet Explorer. Microsoft was fined and in the end was forced to give users a more explicit choice of browsers.

As technology's impact in modern life spreads, European regulators have set the pace in shaping rules for the industry. European governments tend to want to exert more control than the U.S.

The difference in approach was highlighted after a scandal over the misuse of millions of Facebook users' personal data in political campaigns, including the 2016 White House contest. European regulators already had been working on tougher privacy regulation and in May enforced new rules that are influencing the way some companies operate outside of the region as well.

The Google crackdown comes at a sensitive time for trans-Atlantic relations, with President Donald Trump lambasting the EU as a "foe" only last week. The U.S. imposed tariffs on EU steel and aluminum this year, and the

EU responded with import duties on American goods. The U.S. is now also considering taxes on imports of European cars.

The U.S. also has complained that the EU mainly has targeted American companies — including also Apple and Amazon — for breaking competition or tax rules.

"We have to protect consumers and competition to make sure consumers get the best of fair competition," Vestager said. "We will continue to do it, no matter the political context."

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (July 19)	\$1.1936
Dollar buys (July 19)	€0.8378
British pound (July 19)	\$1.34
Japanese yen (July 20)	110.00
South Korean won (July 20)	1,072.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3782
British pound	\$1.2981/0.7704
Canada (Dollar)	1.2449
China (Yuan)	6.7785
Denmark (Krone)	6.4263
Egypt (Pound)	17.0199
Euro	\$1.1597/0.8623
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.6486
Hungary (Forint)	281.18
Israel (Shekel)	3.6569
Japan (Yen)	112.94
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3031
Norway (Krone)	6.4981
Philippines (Peso)	53.62
Poland (Zloty)	3.34
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7511
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3735
South Korea (Won)	1,138.65
Switzerland (Franc)	1.0025
Thailand (Baht)	23.48
Turkey (Lira)	4.8310

Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.00
Discount rate	2.50
Federal funds market rate	31
3-month bill	2.50
30-year bond	2.99

EUROPE GAS PRICES

Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Germany	\$3.154	\$3.498	\$3.740	\$3.528
Change in price	+0.8 cents	+0.2 cents	-0.3 cents	-0.4 cents
Netherlands	--	\$3.735	\$3.885	\$3.819
Change in price	--	-5.8 cents	-5.4 cents	-5.9 cents
U.K.	--	\$3.443	\$3.685	\$3.473
Change in price	--	+0.2 cents	-0.3 cents	-0.4 cents
Azores	--	--	\$3.683	--
Change in price	--	--	-0.3 cents	--
Belgium	--	\$3.061	\$3.369	\$3.257
Change in price	--	no change	no change	no change
Turkey	--	--	\$3.561	\$3.349
Change in price	--	--	-0.3 cents	-0.4 cents
Italy	\$4.240	--	--	\$4.278
Change in price	no change	--	--	no change

PACIFIC GAS PRICES

Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	--	\$3.489	--	\$3.269
Change in price	--	no change	--	-1.0 cents
Okunawa	\$2.899	--	--	\$3.269
Change in price	+1.0 cents	--	--	-1.0 cents
South Korea	\$2.929	\$3.279	\$3.519	\$3.309
Change in price	no change	no change	no change	no change
Guam	\$2.929*	\$3.279	\$3.519	--
Change in price	+1.0 cents	+1.0 cents	no change	--

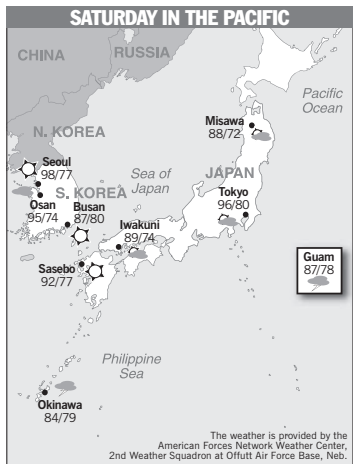
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For the week of July 21-27

MARKET WATCH

July 18, 2018

Dow Jones Industrials	79.40
Nasdaq composite	-0.67
Standard & Poor's 500	6.07
Russell 2000	4.61

WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

WEEKEND



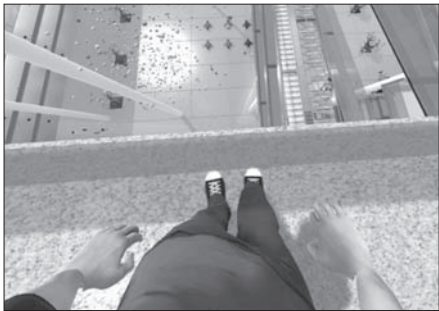
Book explains
Trump's appeal
Page 38

BACK FOR MORE

Denzel Washington returns for his first sequel, reteams
with frequent collaborator Antoine Fuqua in 'Equalizer 2'

Fuqua profile on Page 24; Movie review on Page 25

WEEKEND: GADGETS & CHARTS



Oxford/TNS

A study of 100 people with a clinically diagnosed fear of heights suggests that a virtual reality treatment can help ease fears.

Study: VR can help people overcome fear of heights

By KATE THAYER
Chicago Tribune

Researchers have found that virtual reality exercises can help alleviate a fear of heights, showing how the technology can be used as an accessible, affordable tool in mental health treatment.

The study, published in *The Lancet Psychiatry* journal, was the first to use virtual reality without a therapist — a concept researchers say could be the future of mental health treatment for a variety of problems.

"Immersive virtual reality therapies that do not need a therapist have the potential to dramatically increase access to psychological interventions," lead author, University of Oxford professor Daniel Freeman, said in a statement.

"We need a greater number of skilled therapists, not fewer, but to meet the large demand for mental health treatment we also require powerful technological solutions."

The study examined 100 people with a clinically diagnosed fear of heights, randomly assigning 49 of them the virtual reality treatment and the rest a more typical treat-

ment. The participants answered questions on the severity of their fear at the start of the trial, at the end of the two-week treatment and at a follow-up after four weeks.

The virtual reality treatment involved six 30-minute sessions where participants would wear a virtual reality headset to enter a simulated world that challenged their fear in varying degrees, like walking out on a platform overlooking a large drop or rescuing a cat from a tree.

Most of the participants assigned the treatment completed the full course, researchers said. Of those, the authors of the study heard feedback that the virtual reality experiences helped, with participants saying they were less anxious when they looked over edges or otherwise encountered heights in their lives.

However, the researchers noted that they do not have long-term data on the participants in the study, which was completed earlier this year. It's also unclear if virtual reality could be beneficial for those with mental health issues outside of phobias or anxiety, researchers said.

GADGET WATCH

Smart air conditioner coolest thing in the room

By GREGG ELLMAN
Tribune News Service

Just in time for the hottest stretch of summer, GE Appliances has a new smart air conditioner that keeps you from breaking a sweat to control the flow of cooler air with voice assistance. You won't even have to get out of bed to adjust the air during bedtime hours.

With a simple command to your iPad, iPhone or Apple Watch to access Apple Home app and Siri, the AC unit follows your verbal commands to cool you off or cut the amount of cool air.

Automated settings can easily be created to turn a unit on or off at a certain time so you can come home to a cool home or the cooling can automatically get you ready for bed.

Even if you're not home, if you have a HomeKit home hub (HomePod, 4th generation Apple TV or an iPad with the latest version of iOS), it's a breeze to remotely control the air conditioning units or set up automated settings.

According to the company, the GE smart home appliances are the first in the U.S. to introduce an Apple HomeKit-compatible air conditioner.

Two models are available exclusively at Lowe's and three models exclusively at Home Depot, ranging from \$249 to \$359, are available immediately.

The units can cool medium to large rooms with options of delivering 8,000 to 12,000 BTUs.

They are Energy Star compliant and offer the choice of four-way air direction by selecting from three cooling settings or Energy Saver mode. The latter shuts off the fan and compressor automatically when the room is cool enough.

Online: geappliances.com

ZAGG has expanded its accessory **Nomad Book and Messenger Folio** keyboard lineups and added some great features.

The Zagg Nomad Book (\$99.99) has two detachable bumpers, allowing the keyboard case to fit most tablets sized 10.5 inches or smaller, including many Apple iPad models, the Samsung Galaxy Tab S3 and the Samsung Galaxy Tab S2.



The Zagg
Nomad Book
Zagg/TNS

It also allows multi-device pairing, connecting simultaneously to a tablet and another device such as a smartphone for increased productivity. Depending on the tablet's chore at the time, the Nomad Book can easily adjust the screen angle for optimal viewing.

A sturdy, reverse kickstand and a rechargeable battery that lasts up to two years between USB charges are built in.

The lightweight Zagg Messenger Folio (\$59.99) transforms the 10.5-inch iPad Pro into a practical workstation with its no-nonsense keyboard case, featuring a stylish fabric cover.

A magnetic closure keeps it closed, yet is easy to open. Bluetooth allows for easy wireless pairing, and a built-in rechargeable battery will last up to three months before a USB charge is needed. A built-in holder keeps the Apple Pencil accessible when not in use.

Online: Zagg.com



ZVOX/TNS

The ZVOX AV203 adds six levels of dialogue boost, allowing users to tailor the sound.

Zvox, the creator of the world's first speaker with hearing-aid technology, has released the AV203, next-generation AccuVoice TV Speaker.

Its predecessor, the AV200, used advanced digital algorithms to lift voices out of a soundtrack along with the use of hearing-aid technology to make dialogue crystal clear. The AccuVoice AV203 Speaker uses the same speakers, cabinet and advanced processor as the original model.

But new in the AV203 is six added levels of AccuVoice dialogue boost. The new levels allow users to tailor the sound to their needs.

ZVOX's patented algorithms lift voices out of the soundtrack and manipulate the signals to make dialogue remarkably clear without affecting the rest of the soundtrack, according to the company. The system's Output Leveling system also automatically tames loud commercials.

The AccuVoice AV203 TV speaker uses a digital amplifier and three high-performance full-range speaker drivers with neodymium magnets to create realistic, room-filling sound.

There's also a redesigned remote control, with large, easy-to-read buttons with a water-resistant structure. The speaker has a 17-by-3.1-by-2.9-inch aluminum cabinet and is available in five colors (black, blue, copper, red and titanium).

Online: zvox.com; \$269.99

ON THE COVER: Denzel Washington revisits his role as Robert McCall, a justice-loving retired special-ops agent, in "The Equalizer 2."

Sony-Columbia Pictures

ITUNES MUSIC

The top 10 songs on iTunes for the week ending July 12:

1. "In My Feelings," Drake
2. "Girls Like You" (feat. Cardi B), Maroon 5
3. "I Like It," Cardi B, Bad Bunny & J Balvin
4. "Better Now," Post Malone
5. "Jumpsuit," twenty one pilots
6. "Talk a Yout Out of It," Florida Georgia Line
7. "Simple," Florida Georgia Line
8. "No Tears Left to Cry," Ariana Grande
9. "Nico And The Niners," twenty one pilots
10. "Nice For What," Drake

— Compiled by AP

SPOTIFY MUSIC

The top 10 songs on Spotify for the week ending July 12:

1. "In My Feelings," Drake
2. "Girls Like You" (feat. Cardi B), Maroon 5
3. "God Is a Woman," Ariana Grande
4. "Don't Matter To Me" (feat. Michael Jackson), Drake
5. "I Like It," Cardi B
6. "Lucid Dreams," Juice WRLD
7. "SADI," XXXTENTACION
8. "One Kiss" (with Dua Lipa), Calvin Harris
9. "Solo" (feat. Demi Lovato), Clean Bandit
10. "Taste" (feat. Offset), Tyga

— Compiled by Stars and Stripes

ITUNES MOVIES

The top 10 movies on iTunes for the week ending July 15:

1. "A Quiet Place"
2. "Blockers"
3. "Ready Player One"
4. "Chappaquiddick"
5. "Tomb Raider" (2018)
6. "Daddy's Home 2"
7. "The Greatest Showman"
8. "Beirut"
9. "Black Panther"
10. "Ant-Man"



— Compiled by AP

BOOKS

The top 10 books on Apple's iBook charts for the week ending July 15:

1. "Sharp Objects," Gillian Flynn
2. "All We Ever Wanted," Emily Giffin
3. "Spymaster," Brad Thor
4. "The Perfect Couple," Eliza Hilderbrand
5. "The President Is Missing," Bill Clinton & James Patterson
6. "When Life Gives You Lululemons," Lauren Weisberger
7. "Something in the Water," Catherine Steadman
8. "Long Lost," Harlan Coben
9. "Hornet Flight," Ken Follet
10. "The Outsider," Stephen King

— Compiled by AP

APPS

The top paid iPhone apps for the week ending July 15:

1. Minecraft
2. Heads Up!
3. Plague Inc.
4. Bloons TD 6
5. Facetime
6. Schedule
7. PlantSnap Plant Identification
8. Sky Guide
9. Goal Simulator
10. The Game of Life

— Compiled by AP

WEEKEND

CHECK IT OUT

Events, entertainment and other ways to fill your free time

1

Sharks ready for their annual close-up

Ahh, summer. Even if we don't live anywhere near a beach, we can all dream of pristine white sand, sun ... and Discovery Channel's Shark Week. The 30th installment of the annual franchise kicks off with eight days of shark-centric episodes guaranteed to have that ominous John Williams theme song from "Jaws" running through your head.

This year's feast of finny goodness includes episodes titled "Alien Sharks," "Bear vs. Shark," "Cuba's Secret Shark Lair," "Megalodon: Fact vs. Fiction," "Sharks Gone Wild," "Bloodline: The Spawn of Jaws" and "Shaq Does Shark Week." And no, we did not make up any of those titles.

We almost forgot to tell you the best part: These episodes will all be aired on AFN-Spectrum. Chomp away!

• **Shark Week shows start airing July 23 on AFN-Spectrum.**



Great white sharks, and other toothy denizens of the deep, take center stage next week as Discovery Channel's Shark Week shows come to AFN.

2

ABBA fans know what to do this weekend

The music of ABBA tends to be rather polarizing. Either you love the Swedish pop group's infectious, cheesy harmonies popularized in the '70s, or you really don't. For the first camp, a "Mamma Mia!" sequel sashays into theaters this weekend, bringing with it more Greek island eye candy, more backstory ... and Cher. Set five years after the first movie, "Here We Go Again" delivers all the singing, dancing and romantic mishaps any movie could ... and perhaps a few more than most movies should.

• **Movie reviews on Page 25.**

3

Crash Bandicoot returns in 'N. Sane Trilogy'

So much about entertainment these days seems to cater to nostalgia. This week's video game follows that trend, as Activision bundles three "Crash Bandicoot" games from the '90s into one "N. Sane Trilogy." Reissuing comes with risks, as developers must keep what fans of the games loved the first time around while innovating and refining enough to make the additional purchase worthwhile. In this case, the remastering works. Just avoid that Y button while you're trying to jump, and you'll be in good shape.

• **Video game review on Page 26.**

4

'Great Revolt' gives turn to Trump supporters

Our American political landscape is deeply divided these days. We all know this. What we might struggle at times to understand, though, is the perspective from the side we're not on. "The Great Revolt," by journalist Saleena Zito and Republican strategist Brad Todd, seeks to unearth and explain to the so-called "never Trumpers" why so many residents of the nation's Rust Belt found our president so compelling during the last election. And why, though their voices are rarely heard, so many of them are still loyal supporters.

• **Book reviews on Page 38.**

WEEKEND: MOVIES



A BOND OF TRUST

Longtime collaborators Fuqua, Washington share rich history that continues with 'The Equalizer 2'

"The Equalizer 2" pairs director Antoine Fuqua, left, with Denzel Washington for a fourth time as the duo continue the story of Robert McCall.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SONY-COLUMBIA PICTURES/AP

By RICK BENTLEY
Tribune News Service

Antoine Fuqua doesn't think of "The Equalizer 2" as a follow-up film to his 2014 offering "The Equalizer." Yes, they both feature Denzel Washington taking on the role of Robert McCall. The two films are built around the idea — first established in "The Equalizer" TV series in the '80s — that McCall unselfishly helps the helpless.

Fuqua knows these elements would serve in any dictionary as an exact definition for what it means to be a follow-up film. What the Pennsylvania native is referring to is that his approach to making "The Equalizer 2" was no different than any other movie he's directed since his initial big-screen offering, "The Replacement Killers," in 1998.

"I just try to take each script on its own merit and make the best movie I can," he says. "It's dangerous to try to outdo yourself or try to do the same thing. You just have to make that movie the best it can be and make sure the character — because it is a continuation — has the same DNA as the other one,"

Fuqua says. "It's important that he stays in the zone of the character because he's what leads you through the whole movie."

There was really no pressure on Fuqua to make sure the DNA of the character was the same, as he had two-time Oscar winner Washington in the lead role. The pair's history of working together goes back to 2001 when Fuqua directed Washington to his second Oscar with "Training Day." Along with directing Washington in the first "Equalizer" movie, the two also worked together in 2016's "The Magnificent Seven."

They spent a lot of time talking about the role of McCall before filming "The Equalizer." Once the decisions were made about the character, Fuqua was certain Washington knew exactly how to play him.

Between the two films, a few tweaks were made, such as a change of day jobs, but the heart of the character has never wavered.

That new job takes McCall from working in a hardware store to being a Lyft driver. This helped Fuqua and writer Richard Wenk find a balance of one major mission for McCall mixed with

a series of smaller jobs that most likely came from what he heard while driving. There were long conversations about all the story threads to make sure they felt natural to the "Equalizer" franchise without being too sentimental or going too long.

"One thing I learned from the first movie is how much people connect to this story," Fuqua says. "It is arrogant to think you know what people care about. I remember in the first film wanting to cut out the scene where Jenny gets her ring back. I never showed you what McCall did to the guy, but when she opened the drawer, the ring was there."

"I will never forget the gasp from the audience. People were connecting to it. There are little things that I was holding on to in this movie because I knew they were going to matter to the audience."

Not only does his new job give McCall a natural way to find out about people in need as they talk in the backseat of his car, it also gave the director a chance to focus on one of Washington's greatest acting skills: his ability to get across a multitude of emotions with his face and eyes. He could put the camera in Washington's face because of the con-

fined space in the vehicle.

Fuqua is quick to stress that such a close scrutiny would not work with just any actor because if the focus of the scene can't hold the audience's attention, the director then starts turning to tricks in an effort to make it work. That wasn't necessary in "The Equalizer 2."

"He makes it work because he's so powerful," Fuqua says. "With the cameras focused on his face, you know that McCall is always thinking. He's always watching. You know he's paying attention because he is a very astute character."

Actors who have worked for Fuqua praise his willingness to listen to their suggestions and being available as much as possible to talk about the best way to play a scene. He credits working with Chow Yun-Fat in "The Replacement Killers" for giving him that perspective on working with actors early in his career.

And then he met Washington before filming started on "Training Day."

"He said to me, 'Let's never let each other's hands.' The idea was that we would agree to trust each other," Fuqua says.



Denzel Washington is back as retired CIA black ops agent Robert McCall, delivering vigilante justice for those in need, in "The Equalizer 2." Co-starring Melissa Leo and Pedro Pascal.

WEEKEND: MOVIES

'The Equalizer 2'

Washington kills in thriller

By MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

You won't usually find Denzel Washington in a movie sequel. He just doesn't do them. Something about not wanting to repeat himself. So there must be something special indeed for him to break his own rule for "The Equalizer 2."

Fans of the first film will instantly know why Washington is drawn to the character of Robert McCall, a quiet middle-aged retired special-ops agent who fiercely believes in justice, likes to help others and dispenses the occasional lethal judgment for those deserving.

"The Equalizer 2" reconnects many of the people behind the 2014 debut alongside the equally-vital Washington — Antoine Fuqua returns to direct, as does writer Richard Wenk, and actors Bill Pullman and Melissa Leo.

McCall first appeared in the mid-1980s on TV with Edward Woodward playing him as a bit of an English dandy. In the film series, Washington plays McCall as a taciturn, compulsive, but not consistently. He's the kind of guy who brings his own tea bag to a restaurant in a neatly folded napkin and arranges the cutlery just so. But, when prompted, his vision suddenly becomes hyper-clear and he meticulously pre-plans every step in taking down a room of thugs, often without a gun. He's like Monk crossed with Sherlock Holmes.

In the first film, a hooker with a heart of gold pulls McCall out of retirement when she is badly beaten by her pimp. By the end, McCall has blown up most of Boston's waterfront, exposed a nest of corrupt local cops and systematically executed every member of a Russian gang, even going to Moscow to finish the job.

The second film takes place sometime later, with McCall now a Lyft driver, selectively helping people he encounters. He's kind to old people and little kids, who adore him. He mentors a troubled teen (Ashton Sanders), hoping to steer him away from drug dealing and toward art school. Few people could pull off this cheery sainthood like Washington, oozing charisma and self-assured masculinity.

When a group of smarmy Wall Street types abuse an intern during a coke-fueled party, Washington drives her to the hospital and then returns to wreak vengeance. It takes him a scant 29 seconds to destroy the room full of rich snobs.

The film somewhat confusingly toggles between various initial threads before landing on the main one — someone crucial to McCall's murky past is murdered in Brussels, and that reveals a barrel of bad government apples. The film thus strays far from its roots as a vehicle for McCall to be the avenging angel for a needy stranger. But we get to see McCall solve the crime from his Boston apartment by putting himself in the crime scene like an episode of "Crossing Jordan" and then avenging the death. Oh, there's also a hurricane crashing up the East coast, timed for the climax, a little over the top if we're being honest.

Fuqua is a lyrical director who directed Washington to an Oscar in "Training Day." He's not afraid to spend time in the still darkness with McCall and likes to focus on small moody elements, like rain hitting the gutters. But he can also deliver red meat: A sequence in which McCall fights off a passenger in the back seat of his car is a mini-masterpiece of taut, sinewy direction.

Wenk also has written some juicy dialogue for Washington, including a monologue about individual responsibility he delivers to the young artist in a project stairwell that the actor bites into with obvious relish.

"The Equalizer" is a guilty pleasure for anyone who enjoys that old-school, blue-collar American chivalric hero with a dark past. McCall is cool, with moral clarity and he's three moves ahead of everyone. No wonder Washington wanted another go-around.

"The Equalizer 2" is rated R for brutal violence throughout, language, and some drug content. Running time: 121 minutes.



SONY-COLUMBIA PICTURES/AP

'Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again' is escapist fluff of the highest order

By KATIE WALSH
Tribune News Service

Welcome back to the magical island of Kalokairi, a sun-strewn rocky outcropping in the azure Aegean Sea, a land where white people can only express themselves with the music of Sweden's most enduring musical group, ABBA. The sequel/prequel hybrid "Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again" arrives a decade after the bonkers filmed adaptation of the stage musical "Mamma Mia!" Vehicles for ABBA's songs, the films perfectly reflect the music: guileless, emotionally raw and unabashedly cheesy, wrapped in miles and miles of colorful synthetic fabric.

This many love-lorn ABBA songs requires quite a story into which to shoehorn the tunes, and "Mamma Mia!" tripled down on love lost and found with three spurned lovers, Bill (Stellan Skarsgard), Sam (Pierce Brosnan) and Harry (Colin



UNIVERSAL PICTURES/AP

From left, Julie Walters, Pierce Brosnan, Amanda Seyfried and Christine Baranski star in "Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again."

Firth), returning to Kalokairi for the wedding of Sophie (Amanda Seyfried), who hoped to find her father. Now, she's accepted all three men as adopted dads, and she's reopening the hotel after her mother's death (yep, there's almost no Meryl Streep here). While she gives tours to visitors

around the property, she reminisces about her mother's journey to the island, right out of Oxford. We get the part of the story previously only detailed in a journal, of young hippie Donna (Lily James) and her three wayward lovers.

"Here We Go Again" is a breakout superstar moment

for James as the free-spirited, earthy and open-hearted Donna. She's an inspired singer and dancer, and every time the film cuts away from her story is a bit of a disappointment — even though it's always entertaining to see what new ways the filmmakers have dreamed up to humiliate Skarsgard and Firth. But young Donna's story is so much more emotionally engrossing, and the casting of Donna's friends, the Dynamos (Jessica Keenan Wynn and Alexa Davies) is spot on, as well as her lovers Harry, Bill and Sam (Hugh Skinner, Josh Dylan and Jeremy Irvine).

Director Ol Parker takes over writing and directing duties from Phyllida Lloyd and Catherine Johnson (who wrote the book of the stage musical). Richard Curtis also gets a story by credit.

In Parker's hands, the sequel is far more grounded and melodramatic, lacking some of the rambunctious pop and fizz Lloyd brought to "Mamma Mia!," the cinematic equivalent of trucker speed. There's a lot less running

and singing, and singing while running, but there is, of course, a flotilla of boats filled with people enthusiastically performing choreography to "Dancing Queen."

There's also still enough crackpot insanity to go around: a particularly surreal version of "Waterloo" is set in a French restaurant, and Christine Baranski gets several crackerjack lines. "Have him washed and brought to my tent," she opines after assessing Andy Garcia's seductive Fernando. We haven't even gotten to Cher yet, who turns the last 20 minutes of the film into a personal concert. She's playing Sophie's "grandmother" but truly she's just playing herself, and her sheer presence is applause-worthy.

Much like its predecessor, "Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again" is escapist fluff of the highest order — joyful, filled with beloved pop songs, and incredibly bizarre.

"Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again" is rated PG-13 for some suggestive material. Running time: 114 minutes.

WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES



Classic games lovingly reimagined

in 'Crash Bandicoot N. Sane Trilogy'



Photos courtesy of Activision

"Crash Bandicoot N. Sane Trilogy" is a remastered collection of the first three titles in the series featuring the jumping, spinning marsupial: "Crash Bandicoot," "Crash Bandicoot 2: Cortex Strikes Back" and "Crash Bandicoot: Warped," released from 1996-98.

for Facebook Inc.'s Oculus. Mark Cerny is now the lead PlayStation architect and Andy Gavin is a novelist and entrepreneur.

Interestingly, ardent, mercurial PlayStation inventor Ken Kutaragi had the idea of Crash as an unofficial mascot, so much so that before release he railed loudly at Cerny at the E3 game convention, leaving the young executive in tears. But the wry-eyed, Looney Tunes-inspired bandicoot, clad in bouncy red sneakers and tight blue pants, was key to selling millions of PlayStations.

Any reimagining of the first three games would have to be done with the same care the creators used to code the original.

While two Activision studios worked hard to make the graphics crisp and new, there's some hubris here. Watch the credits for a long, Pixar-like eternity, and you don't come across Gavin, Rubin or Cerny until the receptionists and babies made during the remastering are given shout-outs. That's like saying the craftsman who completed restoration work on the Mona Lisa should be lauded before Leonardo da Vinci.

What's fascinating here is how the gameplay becomes cunningly complex with each iteration from "Crash Bandicoot" to "Warped." The first features a tropical is-

land, armpit-scratching monkeys and a giant boulder rolling just behind Crash as he frantically runs toward the player in an obvious riff on Indiana Jones.

If you're not that nimble a gamer (like me), Crash will flatten as the rock's weight rolls over him. You must witness the flatness repeatedly before the scene ends and you start the checkpoint anew. It's as if the game makers didn't make Coco an equal, playable participant from installment one.) In one outstanding portion, Coco jumps on Puro, her meowing tiger pet, and runs across China's Great Wall to avoid all manner of enemies, including beautiful but mischievous dragon kites.

Elsewhere, you can fly an airplane and drive Jet Skis or motorcycles through harrowing circumstances. Beyond the varied play and lush artwork, Crash also has a number of idle animations added for the remake. When you stop playing, he'll breakdance or spin a Wumpa fruit on one finger, toss it in the air and wonder why it defies gravity — until it hits him



in the head and sprays him with pink goo. I mention this only to note that the attention to detail is high, even though these moments might go unnoticed by players concerned primarily with plowing through to win.

The narrative isn't moving here, but neither were Skylanders' or Mario's stories. Crash always needs to defeat the mad, chuckling Dr. Frankenstein clone, Dr. Neo Cortex. The goated, goading Cortex sneers in self-congratulatory ecstasy, always with an "N" tattooed on his forehead. He's a lap dog for a more awesome, hellish entity, Uka Uka, an anthropomorphic indigenous mask spewing ego and anger.

These power-hungry idiots ultimately fail in their attempts at world domination. Cortex's failed attempt to turn the Bandicoot into a minion results in rebellion. His cross-eyes and panting-dog demeanor belie a natural genius, which is the player's talent at jumping on enemies and spinning into them like a dervish to vanquish them. Yes, the story is cliché and right out of focus group testing 101, but the game play still shines 20 years later.

Still, the rejiggered games have one excruciating flaw on the Nintendo Switch. The Switch's B button makes Crash jump in goofy elegance across streams and crevasses, but it's also close to the Y button. Pressing both the B and the Y, very possible because the tiny buttons are close together, makes Crash faceplant and die. The Y button should have been left with no gameplay assignment at all.

Yet the series, which has sold more than 50 million copies over the years, makes you feel something more than a sense of wonder. There is the sense of elation that comes with the feeling of being so inside this world of adventure that you become a Bandicoot at heart. Much of that has to do with the lovingly reimagined artwork detail not present in other game compilations — features like Crash's green eyes or a jungle with mysterious designs on temple walls.

If a brand new Crash Bandicoot game isn't released soon, it'll be clear that there's something very wrong in the video-game universe.

Platforms: Nintendo Switch, PlayStation 4, Xbox One
Online: crashbandicoot.com

By HAROLD GOLDBERG

Special to The Washington Post

At first blush, it makes perfect sense that Activision would remaster three "Crash Bandicoot" games and compile them under the moniker "N. Sane Trilogy." The game is priced nicely, features a jovial, marsupial protagonist with a manic personality, and was an essential part of PlayStation history.

I approached the compilation with trepidation, though, after playing other revivals during the past year. While these resonated historically, they did not hold up to today's game standards. For instance, "Parappa The Rapper" (1997), a decidedly quirky Japanese offering with characters seemingly cut from a child's sketchbook, was actually

the first rhythm-based music game, presaging "Guitar Hero" and "Rock Band" by many years. But Parappa seemed dated, partially because it wasn't changed from its tube TV-era aspect ratio.

Mario and Zelda games are often repackaged for new generations, recently on Nintendo's mini consoles, but however amazing their level design, I suspect fans are purchasing them to keep as mementos more than for deep, gameplay nirvana because the repackaged versions do not add much to the original experience.

"Crash Bandicoot," released in 1996, was studio Naughty Dog's first game, marketed by Sony in the U.S. as competition to Nintendo's world-renowned plumber hero, Mario. Its creators were young, aggressive and visionary. Jason Rubin is now an executive



More game reviews at [stripes.com/games](https://www.stripes.com/games)

WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Europe

ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Grotte Caglieron is located near the Veneto town of Fregona, about a 45-minute drive west of Aviano Air Base. There are several ways to get there. The easiest is probably to travel via the SS-13. Take the second right at the traffic circle past the Bennett mall and head toward Vittorio Veneto. On the outskirts of that city, start looking for the brown signs for the grotto or follow blue signs for Fregona.

TIMES

Open from sunrise to sunset. A good portion of the site was not accessible in early June because of work to make the walkways safer. This section was set to re-open June 15, but several previous target dates had not been met.

COSTS

Admission is free. The parking lot in Fregona costs 1 euro per hour.

FOOD

There are a few restaurants in Fregona and many more along the route from Aviano. But the best bet might be to bring a backpack or two full of picnic supplies. There's an area designated for picnicking not far from the caves, and there are numerous supermarkets along the driving route.

INFORMATION

The site is not stroller friendly. Kids — and adults — need to watch their steps. Website: prolocofregona.it/en/grotte-del-caglieron

— Kent Harris



PHOTOS BY KENT HARRIS/Stars and Stripes

Grotte Caglieron wasn't that crowded during a recent weekend visit, though it's likely to get more visitors when work is completed to restore more access and when summer vacations start. The caves offer a cool respite from Italy's summer heat.

Deeper treasures

Lesser-known Grotte Caglieron an easy distance from Aviano

BY KENT HARRIS
Stars and Stripes

Italy's most famous sites — such as the Colosseum in Rome, the Grand Canal in Venice and Pompeii — are famous around the world.

But it's not that difficult to live in the country for years and find lesser-known venues that you've never heard of, much less discovered.

Grotte Caglieron is one of those places. It's less than an hour's drive from Aviano Air Base and only about half of that for those who live west of the base. But it's far off normal tourist paths and missing from most guidebooks.

The caves and tunnels at the site, part of the country's national park system, might not be as spectacular as others, such as Grotte Gigante near Trieste. But they've got at least two things in their favor: proximity and cost. Admission is free.

The landscape here was formed over centuries as the Caglieron River carved various paths through softer rock. Today, visitors can see waterfalls, swift-flowing streams and relatively calm pools, as well as caves and tunnels made by nature and by man. Some passageways were laboriously carved out to allow easier access to visitors. One local company has long used a cave to age its cheese.

For first-time visitors, the site could probably use a bit more signage. After winding your way up a twisty road into



Some parts of Grotte Caglieron are natural and some parts are man-made. Either way, there are plenty of interesting views.

the town of Fregona, you'll see some signs indicating that a city lot — with metered parking — might be a convenient place to park. But if you stop there, you'll still be a little more than a mile from the caves. And the walking path to get there can be hard to find at first — and a bit arduous, if you're not in shape. But the scenery is pretty.

There are a few smaller winding roads if you keep on driving above Fregona. These can get you closer to the caves if you're averse to the walk.

In either case, bring walking shoes

with good tread. And tread carefully. The paths can be slippery and difficult to navigate. Much of the site was closed earlier this year, as walkways were judged to be too treacherous. During a visit in early June, reports were that those sections — going deeper into the cave system — were supposed to be open on June 15. But several target dates for re-opening the paths before that were missed. Even with those areas closed, there are still caves, rock formations and waterfalls to check out.

harris.kent@starsandstripes.com



Waterfalls, rocks, bridges and various fauna are in abundance at Grotte Caglieron, a series of caves and tunnels less than an hour's drive from Aviano Air Base, Italy.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

Europe

Futuristic Oslo a lovely place to live, visit

I'm always inspired by Norway's capital Oslo — a classic old city that's chugging into the future. It's architecturally fascinating, extremely livable and mellow. While food — and just about everything else — is expensive, many of Oslo's joys are free.

Situated at the head of a 60-mile-long fjord, Oslo sprawls out from its historic core. Its streets are a mix of alleyways, high-rises, and — especially in its finer residential neighborhoods — grand facades. The city's harborfront hums with international shipping and a thriving cruise industry.

Oslo's grand boulevard, Karl Johans Gate, cuts from the train station through the center of town to the Royal Palace. Oslo made its town center quiet and pedestrian-friendly by sending most traffic through tunnels under the city. The city also levies a traffic-discounting toll on cars as they enter town, which subsidizes public transport.

South of the train station is Oslo's splashy Opera House, its white-marble roof famously sloping into the fjord, creating a public plaza that lets you walk on top of the theater. Near the Opera House sprouts a strip of towering office complexes — nicknamed the "Barcode Project" for the way the buildings' varying heights, widths, and spacing resemble a barcode — giving Oslo a new modern skyline.

The city's ambitious urban renewal project kicked off years ago with the harborfront Aker Brygge neighborhood, a thriving restaurant, shopping and nightlife area with a people-friendly promenade. Each night it's a Nordic paseo. Just a decade ago, this stretch of harbor was an industrial wasteland.

Nearby is the newer Tjvholmen development — a mix of upscale condos, shops, offices, galleries, a modern art museum, and a little beach facing the fjord. Instead

of dining in the yacht club-style restaurants here, I prefer to buy provisions from a grocery store a block away from the harborfront, and take advantage of the plentiful benches and picnic tables. It's a delightful spot to watch seagulls and ferries come and go as the setting sun shines on the old fortress in Oslo's harbor.

Also along the harbor is Oslo's striking City Hall. In front, a series of statues dating from the 1930s celebrates the nobility of the working class. Entering the grand main hall, I'm reminded that in this highly taxed corner of Europe, city halls, rather than churches, are the dominant buildings.

While Norway's state religion is Lutheran, people here rarely go to church. But this hall — where the Nobel Peace Prize is awarded each December — feels like a temple to good government, with altar-like murals celebrating family values, good citizenship and civic administration. The 20,000 square feet of bold and colorful murals show people from all classes and walks of life — collaborating, willingly paying high taxes, and determined to build a better society together.

From the pier in front of City Hall, a ferry shuttles visitors across the harbor to Bygdøy, a peninsula with several museums highlighting the nation's maritime history. Among Oslo's other compelling sights are its National Gallery, Edvard Munch Museum, Norwegian Resistance Museum and Norwegian Folk Museum.

Even with all the slick urban buildings, the feel of Oslo is green — dotted with



Rick Steves/Ricksteves.com

The "Barcode Project," a sleek and distinctive collection of high-rises built on former industrial land, has reshaped Oslo's skyline.

parks and lakes, and surrounded by hills and forests. Visit Frogner Park, just west of the city center, is a perfect place to encounter Norwegian families at play. Strolling here, you feel a positive spirit — both rugged and pragmatic, celebrating life. Within Frogner Park is Vigeland Park, containing a lifetime of work by Norway's greatest sculptor, Gustav Vigeland: 600 bronze and granite statues, each unique.

In the other direction from town is a forested hill with grand city views. A few years ago it was transformed into Ekeberg Sculpture Park, a 10-minute tram ride from the city center. The 63-acre park is a mix of forest trails and contemporary art — 35 statues in all, including some

by prominent artists such as Dali, Rodin, Renoir, Vigeland, and Damien Hirst.

North and inland from downtown is the former working-class district of Grünerløkka. Today's creative and bohemian scene comes here for its convivial night scene, colorful eateries, and mellow cafes. And at the edge of Grünerløkka is a neighborhood that reflects Oslo's changing ethnic complexion: Today one in five of Oslo's citizens is not ethnically Norwegian. Like much of Europe, the people of Oslo are learning to welcome a growing immigrant population.

Rick Steves (www.ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

TOP TRAVEL PICKS

Antiques market in Belgium

The Ciney Expo in Belgium's Namur province is transformed into a happy hunting ground for lovers of antiques and vintage wares through the weekend, as more than 500 exhibitors set up shop at the Ciney Pucés et Salon des Antiquaires.

The extremely popular event takes place both indoors and out. Inside the spacious hall, the Salon des Antiquaires is where professional dealers sell rare and high-quality trappings of past centuries and an expert is on hand to explain the provenance of the wares. The Pucés and Brocante sections take place both indoors and out; here, the assortment of goods includes porcelain, artwork, furniture, jewelry and endless other decorative items.

For many visitors, the most eagerly anticipated moment comes precisely at 2 p.m. July 20, when more than 400 trucks, mostly from the Benelux countries, throw open their tailgates and a frenzy of bargaining commences. The affair known as the "deballage" is billed as the country's largest event of its kind.

The Expo is located at Rue du Marche Couvert 3 in Ciney. Hours are 10 a.m.-7 p.m. July 20 and 10 a.m.-6 p.m. July 21. Entry costs 10 euros on July



Karen Bradbury

Read more about things to do in the Europe Traveler blog: stripes.com/blogs/europe-traveler

20 and 8 euros on July 21-22. Other plans? Mark your calendar for the next edition Oct. 14-16. Online: cineyexpo.be

Old-fashioned wedding celebration in Alsace

Seebach, a small French community just south of the German border, is the site of a folkloric event full of pageantry based on the premise of a wedding ceremony.

All three days of the fest known as Streisshochzeit offer something to see. Costumed actors strike poses portraying life in a rural community throughout the seasons of the year, creating a living portrait of sorts July 20-21. From 6 p.m.

July 21, the "Night of Lights" offers the chance to experience the folklore, music and culinary specialties of the area while wandering from one courtyard to the next; this is followed by a night parade of folkloric groups. The July 22 festivities get underway at 10 a.m. with the re-opening of the courtyards and a gathering of more than 100 costumed wedding party members, who celebrate the nuptials just as their great-great grandparents might have done. Once the bride and groom have said their vows in front of the mayor, an additional 15 wedding pairs in traditional Alsatian costume join their ranks. The main event, a mile-long parade made up of the wedding party and guests, folklore and music groups and horse-drawn carriages, starts at 3:30 p.m.

Seebach, just south of Wissembourg, is about a 90-minute drive from Kaiserslautern. Entry to the parade and spectacle in the courtyards costs 5 euros for adults and is free for those under 16. The entry fee to Friday's living portrait is 3 euros. Online: streisshochzeit-seebach.com

Forchheim's Annafest has beer, atmosphere

Even in a region of a country renowned for its beer, Forchheim stands out. The Franconian



annafest.com

There's plenty of beer for all at Forchheim's Annafest, which also offers rides, bands, traditional treats and games through Aug. 30.

town's main attraction is its Kellerwald, a forested hill dotted with cellars in which the brewers of old kept their beers chilled during the warm months of the year. The cellars remain in use to date, with the beer gardens busy affairs throughout the summer and a handful of breweries offering service year-round.

This unusual setting lends Forchheim's annual volksfest, the Annafest, its one-of-a-kind flair. Twenty-three cellars serve tasty beers brewed specifically for the event in liter-sized steins. Hearty Franconian specialties buffer tummies against

the effects of too much alcohol. Other traditional volksfest activities such as listening to bands, riding scary attractions, snacking on sweet treats and trying out games of chance can be indulged in here as well.

The Annafest runs daily through Aug. 30. Last call is at 11:30 p.m. and the cellars close up an hour later. Forchheim is located along the Nuremberg-Bamberg train line. From the station, a half-hour walk takes you to the heart of the action. Shuttle bus service is also available. Online: alladooch-annafest.de

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING



PHOTOS BY SCOTT WYLAND/Stars and Stripes

Grangusto, near the waterfront in Naples, Italy, has a large wine selection. The restaurant is part of the Market Grangusto, which has a supermarket, a bakery, a wine shop and a bar.

After Hours: Italy

By SCOTT WYLAND
Stars and Stripes

Grangusto is ideal for those who want healthy, well-prepared seafood and meats or a diverse selection of pizzas while visiting Naples' waterfront and historic districts.

The restaurant is part of Market Grangusto, which has a bakery, wine shop, fish market, grocery store and bar. Its white- and cream-decor is reminiscent of South Miami Beach.

And like many South Beach restaurants, you're close enough to the bay to feel a warm, salty breeze but can't see the water. Still, what Grangusto lacks in scenic views, it makes up for in fine cuisine and a hefty wine selection.

For a light dinner, we ordered insalata di mare (seafood salad) for 12 euros (\$14). It was a blend of mussels, shrimp and octopus and was quite tasty.

On another occasion, after spending an afternoon exploring Naples' nearby grand cathedrals, we again went for seafood.

My friend ordered grilled octopus in a puree for 10 euros. I got a raw salmon salad (8 euros) and baccala (cod) cooked at a low temperature with asparagus and nuts (12 euros). The glass of Italian red wine I ordered for 5 euros was just dry enough.

The menu is varied, and you can have a satisfactory meal at a relatively low price. You have your choice of appetizers from the sea or from the mountains, which range from 7 to 14 euros.

The first courses are mostly pastas and average about 10 euros. The smaller second courses run from 10 to 16 euros.

However, the larger second courses jump in price. For instance, one kilogram (2.2 pounds) of steak or fish costs 40



Grilled octopus in a mild puree. Grangusto has an excellent variety of seafood, meat dishes, pizza and wines.



Insalata di Mare (seafood salad) with mussels, shrimp and octopus. Grangusto offers fine seafood and more in a setting with a South Miami Beach flavor.

GRANGUSTO

Location: Via Nuova Marina 5, Naples, Italy 80133
Hours: Lunch noon - 3:30 p.m. Dinner 7:30 p.m. - 11:30 p.m.

Parking: At on-site garage, along the street and at nearby Port of Naples.
Phone: +39 081 1937 6800
Website: grangusto.it/ristorante.php (English version)

— Scott Wyland

to 60 euros. The most expensive items are spiny lobster (120 euros) and a Japanese ribeye steak (260 euros).

The menu depicts several pages to pizzas.

Grangusto's website touts its fish as being wild and not farm raised, and its vegetables as being regionally grown. It says the salts used in preparing the food come from the Himalayas, Hawaii and Sicily.

In any case, you'll find Grangusto not your typical dining experience, even in a city brimming with good restaurants.

wyland.scott@stripes.com

Lone snail farm in US trying to spread interest in delicacy

By JASON WILSON
Special to The Washington Post

Life on the only USDA-certified snail farm in the United States is, as one might imagine, pretty slow. And quiet. And small, with the entire farm contained within one 300-square-foot greenhouse in the middle of Long Island's wine country. At Peconic Escargot, 30,000 to 50,000 petit gris snails coexist in large plastic bins of dirt, munching on wild greens, living a life mostly free of drama.

"A snail farm wants to be quiet and low-key. Snails can't hear, but they're very sensitive to vibrations, touch, heat and light. You don't want to stress them out," said Taylor Knapp, Peconic Escargot's self-proclaimed "head snail wrangler." Stress means slime, which snails produce as a defense mechanism. The snail wrangler does not want slime. "They're at their slimeiest when you've irritated them."

Still, the snail farm is not entirely absent of intrigue. "We haven't had any escapes," Knapp said. When I laughed, he replied, "No, really. That's what the USDA is worried about. These snails would be an invasive species." The neighboring farmers and winegrowers would be furious.

Snails might be having a culinary moment. Along with a continued interest in local ingredients and alternative, sustainable protein, there has been a resurgence of hip French restaurants, such as Frenchette in New York City, where diners line up to eat the status-symbol brouillade, a dish of scrambled eggs topped with Peconic's snails in garlic butter.

I don't really know what I expected to find on my visit to the snail farm, but I certainly didn't anticipate describing these mollusks as "cute." Yet there I was, cooing "awww" when they poked their little heads, with their googly-eyed antennae, out from their shells.

"We actually have to be careful of the way we portray them on Instagram," Knapp said. "We don't want to portray snails as cute. We want people to eat them."

Cuteness aside, the reason most people don't eat snails is twofold: They either think of the gross, slimy critters in their gardens, or they have a negative reaction to clichéd escargot — always on the menu of French — and the highfalutin, old-fashioned image of the dish.

"We're focused on convincing people who are too squeamish to eat snails. We've learned that we have to do much more education than we thought," Knapp said.

The most surprising thing Knapp found was how many chefs did not know how to work with fresh snails. Pretty much all imported escargot served in restaurants are canned and precooked. In many cases, imported canned snails from



KATELYN KNAPP, PECONIC ESCARGOT
The Washington Post

"We actually have to be careful of the way we portray [snails] on Instagram," says Taylor Knapp of Peconic Escargot in New York. "We don't want to portray snails as cute. We want people to eat them."

France are simply a reheated delivery vehicle for consuming a ton of butter. The shells they're served in at many restaurants are simply serving vessels that are diswashed, sanitized and used again.

"All over the U.S., people are eating canned snails," Knapp said. "We've encountered chefs that are so concerned with French products that they'd rather cook a canned snail from France rather than a fresh one from here."

Worldwide, certain species of snails are becoming extinct at an alarming rate. Last year, at least 140 scientific papers were published, detailing how pollution, pesticides and climate change are affecting the population.

Meanwhile, petit gris snails are not even close to endangered — more like the opposite. Although not native to North America, they have become an invasive pest here to farmers and gardeners, who would rather see them on a menu than nibbling their crops.

Ric Brewer, a former species survival coordinator for the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, now raises petit gris snails that he finds near his home in Washington's Olympic Peninsula, and sells them to restaurants in the Pacific Northwest under the label Little Gray Farms (petit gris means "little gray").

Brewer sees a potentially sustainable food source in this invasive species. "Snails have a much smaller carbon footprint than most traditional protein sources," Brewer said. "They're a healthy protein, low in fat and really versatile." Knapp says he's able to produce 40 pounds of protein a week from his 300-square-foot greenhouse, a much smaller footprint than beef, pork or chicken.

Still, the petit gris' reputation as an invasive species is why it's so difficult to obtain a USDA certification for a farm. Brewer hopes to soon have the second USDA-certified snail farm so he can import more petit gris for propagation than he can find in the wild. "It's been painfully difficult," he said. "They're afraid you'll let them loose."



Raw salmon salad with green olives and juicy sliced tomatoes.



Baccala (cod) cooked at a low temperature with asparagus and nuts is on the varied menu.

WEEKEND: TRAVEL

By GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO
Associated Press

The flamenco strains were so haunting I asked the quintet of 20-somethings playing guitars on the doorstep of a massive, whitewashed centuries-old church if I could listen for a spell.

"Sure. Want a sip?" one replied, offering the litrona — a quarter-gallon bottle of beer — they were sharing. Then they went back to jamming, their notes echoing up the steep, narrow lane in one of the most monument-filled, tourist-empty cities in the Iberian peninsula.

Caceres is a highlight of Extremadura, a Spanish region of vast sun-parched landscapes and untouched historical jewels exactly halfway between the ever-more-crowded capitals of Madrid and Lisbon, Portugal.

I spent a weekend there last October exploring Roman ruins, climbing up medieval towers and scarfing down plates of the famed local ham without seeing one tour group.

I traveled mostly on comfortable public buses that rolled through olive and oak tree-studded hills, past fortified towns and palm-fringed farms, stopping to pick up schoolchildren returning home and elderly couples going to market.

Every stop appealed — especially Trujillo with its castle — but I focused on three must-sees: Merida, Caceres and Guadalupe.

Imperial power

This small city played a role in two of the world's great empires, Rome's and Spain's.

As their provincial capital, Romans filled Merida with public and private showpieces. Centuries later, many of the conquistadores that led Spain's dominion in the Americas came from this region (and returned to fill it with palaces).

Just across the two-millennia-old, half-mile river bridge, stand a couple of monuments dedicated to Merida by Rome and by its namesake city in Yucatan, Mexico.

Next to the monuments, in a fortress built by a ninth-century emir, I descended the steps of a water cistern decorated with Roman and Visigoth marble panels and carvings of leaves and grapes. Just past the bright-red bullfighting arena, in the Roman Casa del Mitreo, I marveled at the bright turquoise sea depicted in a 2,000-year-old floor mosaic representing the cosmos, including a sun figure with a crown of rays exactly like the Statue of Liberty.

There is a Circus Maximus so gigantic you can imagine thousands of spectators roaring as chariots sped down the straight. But when I took my brevo, the stage was the Roman Theater, its stage wall decorated with exquisitely detailed floral elements and veined marble columns that glowed blue in the afternoon sun.

In the pedestrianized streets of the workaday downtown, I found the Augustan-era Temple of Diana, its huge colonnade framing a porticoed Renaissance



The view from Plaza de San Mateo, one of the highest tiny squares in Caceres, a hilltop town full of slender medieval towers, convents and Renaissance places. It is a highlight of Spain's Extremadura region, halfway between Madrid and Lisbon and wonderfully off the mass tourism trail.

Extremadura

Monument-filled, tourist-empty site is a Spanish gem

palace — two empires literally fused.

Gold treasure

Caceres' strawberry-gold walled monumental core hugs a hilltop, with hardly a single modern element among slender medieval towers and Renaissance palaces covered in coats of arms. It looks perfect enough for a movie set, but still feels real — I watched a nun in a white habit hurry under a stone arch, not a selfie stick in sight.

In Plaza de San Mateo, where a crested tower and a bell tower jostle for height, I chatted about U.S. presidential politics through

a convent turnstile with the Kenyan sister selling me cookies.

Places to visit include the Santa Maria cathedral, full of conquistador tombs, around the corner from the Toledo-Moctezuma palace built by a mixed local-Aztec family, and the Casa de las Veletas museum, with an arch-lined Arabic aljibe (cistern).

But I found it hard to stop making laps up and down the entire town, following the sun as it marched across stern yet sumptuous facades, revealing sculpted stone details like grinning gargoyles, lions holding an escutcheon, and a puffy-cheeked sun itself.

Fortified by wild boar tapes

and shots of local bellota liquor — made from the same acorns eaten by pigs that end up as Iberia's best hams — I kept wandering into the night. My steps and those flamenco melodies were the only sounds in floodlit cobblestone alleys.

Spiritual escape

The enormous swirling rose window of the Royal Monastery of Guadalupe towers over this tiny, remote mountain village where pilgrims have come for seven centuries to honor the Virgin Mary. Columbus was among them and the conquistadores brought the devotion to

KNOW & GO

MERIDA: turismomerida.org/home

CACERES: ayto-caceres.es/turismo

GUADALUPE: monasteriogadalupe.com

GETTING THERE: Fly to Madrid or Lisbon; buses connect them, stopping at Merida, www.avanzabus.com. Trains/buses link Merida with Caceres; from Caceres, bus to Guadalupe.

TIPS: Summers are Arizona-hot; visit in spring or fall.



PHOTOS BY GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO/AP

The Temple of Diana, one of the best preserved of the Roman monuments that fill Merida, Spain. In a sign of Merida's fusion of great empires — the Roman and the Spanish ones — the temple was incorporated into a porticoed Renaissance palace.

Below: The escutcheon on the Casa del Sol, a 16th-century palace in Caceres.



Latin America, where the Virgin de Guadalupe remains widely revered.

The fortress-like complex is filled with whimsical decorations, such as the cloister shrine and turrets covered in green and white tiles, and treasures, including jewel-encrusted reliquaries and paintings by Zurbarán. I had my last dinner in Extremadura — wild mushrooms, venison stew and homemade custard — in the little square facing the main monastery entrance, where a few locals chatted and water trickled from a medieval fountain.

The bells tolled. Then, unbroken silence.

Air travel challenging for diabetics

By CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

Special to The Washington Post

Before she boarded her flight from Santiago, Chile, to Buenos Aires, Argentina, the unthinkable happened to Barbara Rowan: a security screener tried to confiscate her needles.

Rowan, who is a diabetic, needs to carry hypodermic needles with her for medical reasons. So she struck a deal with the Chilean airport officials: The chief pursuer would hold the packaged needles until the plane landed in Argentina.

For people with diabetes, such challenges are just part of air travel. And thanks to factors such as unpredictable preflight-screening rules and limited availability of food and beverages on planes, it's not getting any easier. But a few precautions and a little creativity can help you reach your destination without experiencing a health crisis.

If you're not one of the 29 million Americans who are diabetics or don't know anyone who is, here's why needles are important: Insulin injections control blood-sugar levels in diabetics. Without medication, Rowan's blood sugar could have spiked to a dangerously high level.

Uncertainty plagues almost everyone traveling with diabetes. Will the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) allow me through the screening area? Did I remember to pack my insulin?

The TSA allows diabetes-related supplies and medication through security checkpoints once they've been screened. Passengers should declare these items and separate them from other belongings before screening begins, according to the agency. Outside the United States, the procedures are similar, although they can vary. The American Diabetes Association also publishes a helpful guide to air travel.

If you're traveling with an insulin pump, check with the device manufacturer for airport screening recommendations. While the TSA might try to scan the pump, it might or might not be safe for the device. It's best to ask a security agent to screen the device separately.

Keep your medications in original, clearly labeled containers and bring a copy of your prescriptions. That should prevent them from being confiscated.

Another often-recommended precaution: Wear a medical bracelet that has details of your condition — just in case you end up slumped over in your seat.

Preparedness for diabetic travelers starts with travel insurance — many policies don't cover preexisting medical conditions — but extends to food, medication, and, of course, monitoring your glucose. "Have your blood glucose monitoring supplies handy," advises Chrysa Nasca Kirsch, a registered nurse at the Cleveland Clinic. "Bring extra testing supplies to ensure that you will not be without if extra testing is needed or your stay is extended."

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WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

Pacific

SWEET & SOUR

Stop and smell the impressive collection of tropical plants at Foster National Garden on Oahu

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

Nestled on the edge of downtown Honolulu, the Foster National Garden is home to scores of rare and unique flowering plants and trees from around the tropics. It's also home to two of the world's most malodorous botanical wonders: the corpse flower and the cannonball tree. The bloom of the former is a rare treat; the fruit of the latter can be sniffed year-round.

To be fair, there's a lot more to the 14-acre garden than these two foul-smelling plants, fun as they are. That's because the Foster National Garden is the city's oldest botanical garden, with the oldest of the towering trees that punctuate the property planted in the 1850s.

Perhaps one of the most impressive of the garden's trees is the ficus religiosa, or sacred fig — commonly referred to as a bodhi tree due to its importance in Buddhism. (The Buddha was said to have attained enlightenment beneath the shade of a bodhi tree.)

The sapling that grew into this impressive tree was given to Mary Foster, the one-time owner of the garden's land, in 1913 by the Mahabodhi Temple in India. The tree's outstretched branches form a huge canopy that envelops the garden's entrance, welcoming visitors into the garden.

Foster, a devoted Buddhist and descendant of Hawaiian royalty, would later bequeath the land to the City of Honolulu in 1930, requesting that the city "accept and forever keep and properly maintain" the gardens as a public park.

Unlike some of the city's other gardens devoted to Hawaiian indigenous flora, the Foster's living collection comes from jungles around the world.

Among the garden's highlights is a macadamia tree, whose nuts are almost synonymous with Hawaii.

Despite the prominence of the macadamia industry throughout the state, the tree is actually indigenous to Australia. Macadamia nuts also have the reputation of being an expensive variety commodity, due partially to the fruit's incredibly thick and troublesome shell. A macadamia nut requires nearly 300 pounds per square inch of pressure to crack — meaning a highly specialized technique is required to properly crack the shells without breaking the nut inside.

If you're looking to get up close and personal with living giants, make a pit stop at the base of the quipo and/or the baobab. The quipo, which boats an 8-foot diameter, stands like a cement-gray tower among the many other plants and trees at the Foster. Its soft, balsa-like wood is used to make canoes and rafts in some parts of the world.

The baobab, a large and bulbous tree native to Africa, possesses the largest trunk of any tree in the garden. A multi-purpose plant, the baobab is a tried and true favorite among residents of Africa both big and small. Bats drink the nectar from its flowers; baboons eat its fruit; giraffes seek out its hard-to-get leaves — and humans use all three, with the bark for fiber, the fruit in drinks, and the leaves in medicine.

Another imported tree that's become dear to the heart of Hawaiians is the coffee arabica, which was first brought to Hawaii in the early 1800s — hundreds of years after coffee beans had become a staple drink in the Middle East and Europe.

Coffee is now a major commercial crop in Hawaii, with pure Kona coffee roasts selling for about \$30 per pound.

But what about those stink-producing plants?

When I last visited the Foster Botanical Garden in July, a garden staffer told me the park's famous amorphophallus titanum, or corpse flower, was just days away from blooming. Native to the Sumatra region in Indonesia, the blooming flower draws in carrion beetles and flies with its infamously pungent



PHOTOS BY WYATT OLSON/Stars and Stripes

Clockwise from top left: A towering bodhi tree greets visitors as they enter Foster Botanical Garden in Honolulu; the corpse flower stands on the verge of blooming in early July; the fruit of the cannonball tree is filled with foul-smelling pulp; a young girl stands beside a massive baobab tree.

and overwhelming smell.

The plant, which stands about 5 feet tall, smells exactly as the name implies. To me, the smell that day was akin to the faint whiff of a dead mouse. Corpse-y, yes — but nothing to raise a stink about yet.

A corpse flower bloom, however, is a rare spectacle. The plant blooms irregularly — sometimes going without a bloom for many years.

Visitors in search of an unforgettable olfactory experience should also not miss the Foster's two cannonball trees — a rare specimen native to South America.

When I first approached this tree, I saw on the ground what looked to be rusty, old-fashioned cannonballs.

"Don't get too close," a garden regular advised me as I bent over to inspect one of the strange, large fruit. "If one drops off the tree, it can split your skull."

If a blow to the head from a wayward cannonball tree fruit doesn't leave you dizzy, the smell of the fruit certainly will. The ground surrounding the tree is littered with cracked and rotting pieces of the fruit, which contain a blue, oozy pulp with a smell as distinct as it is difficult to describe. (The closest way to replicate the smell: Take old, worn gym socks and stuff them with overripe bananas and potatoes. Leave locked and sealed in your car's glove compartment during August until suitably foul. Enjoy.)

Whether you're in search of something sweet or something unappealingly sour, the Foster National Garden is the perfect way to enhance the sights (and smells) of any Hawaiian vacation.

olson.wyatt@stripes.com
Twitter: @WyattOlson



ON THE QT

DIRECTIONS

Address: 180 N. Vineyard Blvd., Honolulu, HI 96817. Head west on Ala Wai Boulevard, then take a right on Kalakaua Avenue. Take left onto Bereetania Street. Drive a mile and a half, then take a right onto Queen Emma Street. In a few blocks, turn left onto South Vineyard Boulevard. The entry is about a quarter mile down on the right.

TIMES

Open daily 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

COSTS

Adult tickets are \$5, while tickets for children ages 6-12 is \$1; admission for children aged 5 and under is free. A brochure available at the entrance provides visitors with a self-guided tour. A free guided tour is given each day at 10:30 a.m.

FOOD

The garden has no cafe or vending machines — so bring beverages, snacks or a picnic lunch.

INFORMATION

Ample free parking is offered in the Foster National Garden parking lot. Wear casual shoes for walking on uneven and sometimes muddy ground. Bring a blanket if picnicking, as the grass can be damp. Online: www.honolulu.gov/cms-dpr-menu/site-dpr-sitearticles/568-foster-botanical-garden.html

— Wyatt Olson

WEEKEND: FOOD & DINING

Pacific



Wise Sons Tokyo offers a variety of bagels with the promised chew factor of bagels back in the U.S. Customers can choose from different classic cream cheese spreads and a few seasonal flavors using Japanese ingredients like yuzu citrus and fish roe. The delicatessen is located in the basement of an office building near Tokyo Station. Right: A detail from the deli's window.



After Hours: Japan

By DENISSE RAUDA
Stars and Stripes

In Tokyo, there are a few times when finding a specific taste of home can prove difficult. For the most part, nearly all expat cravings can be satisfied here — albeit at a premium price, and often with a compromise in flavor and execution.

An entire subsection of food missing from Tokyo's otherwise vast and varied dining scene is the classic Jewish deli — not unlike one would expect to find in New York or San Francisco.

Thanks to Wise Sons Tokyo, a San Francisco chain that recently opened its first overseas outlet in the eastern section of the sprawling city, the days of hungry expats longing for a piping hot pastrami sandwich or hearty bowl of matzo ball soup are gone.

Located in the basement of a towering office building near Tokyo Station, Wise Sons' wide selection of deli food promises Tokyoites a meal that departs greatly from the typical Japanese fare served across the city.

A variety of bagels, prepared lunches and desserts greets diners as they enter the restaurant. Wise Son offers different specials for breakfast and lunch — but the restaurant also has an all-day menu that includes bagel sandwiches, full-size pastrami or corned beef sandwiches, hamburgers and salads.

When Wise Sons Tokyo opened, founders Evan and Ari Bloom told Tablet Magazine they would keep the menu as authentic to the original Wise Sons as possible — with some minor adjustments.

For instance, Wise Sons Tokyo bakes their own matzo, the pastrami is made with Australian beef cured right outside of Tokyo, and the selection of spreads (or schmears, as they're called on the menu) incorporate traditional Japanese ingredients, such as salmon or yuzu citrus.

Wise Sons also offers a variety of bento-style lunchboxes — which the bagel bentos are first of their kind in Tokyo — which include a bagel, schmear and salad. These compact lunches make the perfect meal to bring along during a ride on the shinkansen, Japan's bullet train. (I definitely have my eye on the lox box for my next trip departing from Tokyo Station.)

I visited Wise Sons during the post-lunch rush on a recent Friday afternoon, and was surprised to snag a table as the occupants were finishing up. The restaurant offers sufficient seating that includes counter seats — but the seating area almost always fills up during peak hours.

For a lunchtime bargain, try one of the three available lunch sets that range from 800 yen (about \$7.25) to 1,200 yen each. The sandwich set includes half of either a classic corned beef or pastrami sandwich, a side and a drink. The matzo ball soup set also comes with a small

WISE SONS TOKYO

Location: Marunouchi, 2 Chome-4-1, Floor B1
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-6390

Directions: Wise Sons Tokyo is accessible via several train lines — including the JR Yamanote and Chuo Lines, and the Tokyo Metro Marunouchi Line — at Tokyo Station. Follow signs for the Marunouchi South Gate exit. Wise Sons is located in the basement food court of the nearby Marunouchi building.

Hours: Mon.-Fri.
7:30 a.m.-9 p.m.;
Sat. 8:30 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sun. 8:30 a.m.-8 p.m.

Prices: Prices for items vary, with most bagels under 300 yen (about \$2.75) and most pastries under 500 yen. A breakfast set that includes a bagel, choice of schmear and a drink is 600 yen.

Lunch sets range in price from 800 to 1,200 yen. A la carte items include matzo ball soup (600 yen), salads (700 to 900 yen) and a variety of sandwiches (800 to 1700 yen).

Dress: Casual

Information: www.giraud.co.jp/wisesons

— Denise Rauda



Matzo ball soup — hot enough to warm even the chilliest diner, but it could use more flavor.

side salad and drink. For the health-conscious: the salad set includes a side of rye bread and a drink.

The drink options are standard: iced or hot coffee, tea, orange juice. For 100 yen more, diners can upgrade to a cappuccino, latte, green juice or premium cold cream iced coffee.

I chose the pastrami lunch set with a cucumber salad and iced tea, while my companion opted for the corned beef set. For good measure, we also ordered a cup of matzo ball soup to share.

We waited a good 15 minutes for our order to be delivered to the table. At first glance, the sandwich looked small — which I confirmed upon taking my first bite. The bread was perfectly toasted and the mustard



PHOTOS BY DENISSE RAUDA/Stars and Stripes

The hot pastrami sandwich lunch set at Wise Sons Tokyo included a small salad, fries and a drink. Grainy mustard comes on the side to slather on to your heart's content.

— which by the way, is also unique to the Tokyo branch, as the owners and chef had to find a Japanese mustard close in flavor and consistency to what is served in the U.S. restaurant — enhanced the flavor of the soft, tangy pastrami.

While the classic corned beef sandwich looked similar to the pastrami, the flavor of the pastrami was far superior.

Lured by the minor discount offered by the lunch set, I immediately regretted my decision to not order the larger sandwich without the frills of a side salad and iced tea.

The matzo ball soup, on the other hand, had a much more generous portion size — but the flavor fell a bit on the bland side. I had recently been suffering from severe allergies, so the warm soup was soothing, and I appreciated the texture of the matzo and the bits of chicken thrown in. However, I would probably not order the soup again unless the weather was extremely cold, and in case I ever had a craving for flavorless broth.

In all, Wise Sons' lunch set was pretty filling. Despite my initial order regret, I probably wouldn't have been able to finish the full-sized pastrami sandwich. Even so, at the end of my meal, I still felt like I wasted my time (and appetite) on the uninvited side items. I was also, unfortunately, too full to sample the restaurant's sweeter offerings, like the babka, the challah French toast or rugelach — but I promised myself I would visit soon to satisfy my sweet tooth.

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WEEKEND: TRAVEL



Airlines are encouraging passengers to reimburse their frequent flyer miles for experiences. "It's a great alternative to have," said James Durkin, of Edgebrook, Ill. Durkin and his family have used miles to watch a Chicago Bears game in a private suite at Soldier Field and to eat at trendy restaurants in the city.

Chicago Tribune photos



THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

BY LAUREN ZUMBACH
Chicago Tribune

Most people save frequent flyer miles to splurge on a bucket-list trip. But some airlines are betting customers want them to be a little more creative.

Instead of swapping miles for a flight, customers at United Airlines could use them to buy or bid on experiences, like a recent auction promising a trip to London with a chance to be an extra in an upcoming Spider-Man film. Aviation geeks might have preferred another recent United auction, which promised a visit to the airline's Tupelo, Miss., aircraft disassembly center to celebrate the airline's last Boeing 747, including a Champagne toast in the first-class cabin. Meanwhile, two people attending the ESPY Awards later this month will be Delta Air Lines frequent flyers who spent 426,000 miles to walk the sports awards show's red carpet.

To keep passengers loyal, frequent flyer programs need to offer something for everybody. But traditional perks like flights and upgrades can leave airlines' best customers cold.

"For a lot of customers with large balances, who spend a lot of time traveling, the idea of getting on a plane is not a top priority," said Luc Bondar, United's vice president of loyalty. "They're looking for other ways to find value."

Airlines have long let customers redeem miles for things other than travel, such as using them to buy merchandise. But customers who use miles to shop rarely get as much bang for their buck as they might have if they'd used them for a flight, said Brian Karimzad of Milecards.com.

The more unusual rewards can be a good deal, Karimzad said, especially when they involve experiences passengers can't readily buy with cash, such as VIP perks or a chance to go behind the scenes at the carrier's own operations.

"It becomes your own personal value, and that can be worth more than what you can get booking a ticket to Europe," he said.

While many do require a lot of miles, they're not just for road warriors who would struggle to spend their miles on travel alone. When life with two kids made jet-setting more of a challenge, the Durkins, of Edgebrook, Ill., started using miles for nights out closer to home. They've met big-name chefs over meals at trendy Chicago restaurants and watched a Bears game from a private suite at Soldier Field. In a few weeks, they'll attend a wine

Pairings use airline miles for anything from sporting event tickets and fancy meals to walk-on movie roles

pairing class with a sommelier — all paid for with miles earned through travel and a credit card they use for their speech therapy business.

"It's a great alternative to have," said James Durkin, 37. "It forces us to make time for date nights."

Experiences aren't about to unseat travel as the most popular way United Airlines' frequent flyers spend their miles, but the category is growing. And United plans to continue to expand the range of options it offers, including more activities for international customers, Bondar said.

More choices aren't always better, according to a 2015 report by Jay Sorensen, president of airline consulting company IdeaWorks. Airlines should focus on unique experiences that fit the airline's brand rather than an "endless buffet" of generic choices, he wrote.

Bondar said experiences tied to major sporting events tend to be particularly popular with United customers, especially when tickets are hard to come by on the open market or come packaged with other perks.

One United customer bid more than 1.5 million miles to win a trip to the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro that included event tickets, travel and a four-night hotel stay, Bondar said.

At Delta, frequent flyers can use miles to buy or bid on tickets to concerts and sporting events and vacation packages. Some come with VIP perks like a photo op with the winning driver at a NASCAR race or dinner at a hot restaurant including a kitchen tour with the chef.

Delta sees "increased ongoing engagement" with customers who use miles for experiences, Sandeep Dube, the airline's vice president of customer engagement and loyalty, said in an e-mailed statement.

"Those experiences enhance the overall SkyMiles program, where we are constantly striving to bring members — from those who travel weekly to those who are just starting to travel — new options and innovative partnerships that appeal to them, and ultimately make the SkyMiles program more valuable."

Delta also offered its own version of the 747 sendoff, which let passengers bid for some seats on final flights for employees. But United seems to have gone furthest in designing experiences related to the airline itself. In addition to the 747 farewell events, United has auctioned flight simulator sessions at its Denver training center and sold tickets to events offering a sneak peek at new Polaris airport lounges for 2,500 miles.

WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE

By GRACE WONG
Chicago Tribune

The third floor of the Center on Halsted is home to many things — a gymnasium, youth programs and art installations. But tucked behind the doors of an “Authorized Personnel Only” sign is a small kitchen where 25 people from all walks of life train in the culinary arts for nine weeks at Silver Fork.

“I call it culinary boot camp,” said Nicole Pederson, director of culinary arts.

The program is a 9-week-long course that trains people on understanding recipes, the language of the kitchen, knife skills and front of house responsibilities. Students also have the opportunity to be certified in a number of ways to allow them to serve alcohol and work in the food industry. The program itself is free, and students are given a stipend to pay for shoes, knives, a uniform or other necessities.

Since its start in 2011, Silver Fork has had an employment success rate of about 70 percent, with alumni working in various hospital settings, from cooking in restaurants like Big Jim’s to managing roles at Eataly.

Pederson, former executive chef of Found and The Barn in Evanston, is fairly new to the program, having joined in January. After working in restaurants for 20 years, Pederson knew she wanted to do something more than just cooking day to day and saw that Chicago had a huge void for passionate and talented cooks.

“It was important to me to find a place that was more about the community and really about helping and training people,” Pederson said.

It’s exactly this sense of community and empowerment that the program aims to achieve, said Modesto Tico Valle, CEO of the Center on Halsted. Originally, the program’s goal was to provide opportunities for homeless LGBTQ youth to enter the workforce and get entry-level jobs. But when the economy tanked in 2008, an increasing number of adults came to the Center on Halsted for assistance.

Now, the program trains a wide range of ages, from 18 to 65, with individuals from diverse racial and economic backgrounds.

“They learn the hard skills of cooking, like knife work, and being placed in employment, but it’s also about the relationships they have formed,” Valle said. “Someone believed in them and didn’t give up and it’s that person who took the extra step to make sure they had shoes and transportation and the proper clothing. What matters to our students is that they were cared for.”

The Center on Halsted is a community center for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning individuals with a goal of advancing the health and well being of the community, Valle said. The center’s approach is holistic; for Silver Fork, employment is the program’s goal because it helps lift people out of homelessness and boost self esteem.

“Employment is a huge piece of one’s life,” Valle said. “If you don’t have something to do, you can’t take care of yourself, get food, have shelter.”

A key element of the program is being connected to a network of alumni and chefs who care about the individual. If an individual is late, the student is pulled aside to discuss what could be keeping them from showing up on time, whether this is through working on case management, finding housing or identifying other stressors.

Companies also come in to conduct chef demos and to identify individuals who may be a good fit for hire. But Valle said the end goal is to help people find a career and place someone in a position where a relationship has already been established with the employer.

While the program aims to recruit from the LGBTQ community, the classes are almost evenly split between those in the LGBTQ community and others, according to the Cen-

Chicago program teaches kitchen skills, confidence

CULINARY BOOT CAMP

ter on Halsted’s data.

“It’s open and welcoming, and (students) can walk into the building and not have to be afraid to be themselves, and the same goes for the classroom,” Pederson said. “Restaurants can be intimidating places, and being able to find a place and learn those skills and not worry about being judged for your sexuality, I think it’s a huge thing to have that safe space.”

Culinary skills should be accessible, Pederson said, and Silver Fork allows its students to gain those skills without falling into debt, as some people do from attending traditional culinary school. She’s currently trying to make chefs more aware of the program so they can hire graduates into their kitchens.

There are a number of criteria that applicants must meet to qualify for the program, among them making less than \$40,000 a year, residing in Chicago, completing the application and participating in two interviews. The program accepts only 25 students per session, but as many as 120 have applied in the past.

Tara Jones, who identifies as lesbian, said it was a positive experience to go and learn in an environment where she felt comfortable in her sexuality and age.

Jones worked in retail for a number of years before becoming a butcher at Whole Foods. But she suffered a lower back injury from a pinched nerve and had to leave her position. Unemployed, she was scrolling through Facebook when she came across an ad for Silver Fork.

“It’s a place that gives you an opportunity to find out if this is what you’re

looking for,” Jones said.

“It was comforting for a person like me who is in between and not knowing where I wanted to go in my age.”

Jones was 41 when she went through the program in spring of 2013. Now, she is a central supervisor in the kitchen at Eataly, managing the various restaurants inside the Italian market and food hall.

“I always liked to cook, but for some reason I never thought about doing it as a life. I got there and I was scared because I didn’t have experience, I was just cooking at home,” Jones said. “(My instructor) just made me feel comfortable, and he gave me confidence on making it all right for me to try something different than going into retail. No one ever has given to me confidence that I needed in that time in my life.”

And these sentiments are echoed by other students, like William Howard, whose blog about being homeless and losing his longtime girlfriend to cancer was featured in the Tribune last year.

Now a kitchen manager at Big Jim’s in Boystown, Howard, 51, said the program helped sharpen his knife skills and helped him realize that there were people he could count on.

However, Diana Davila, chef and owner of Mi Tocaya Antojeria, said that

smaller kitchens like hers may be hesitant to hire people from training programs such as Silver Fork, simply because the restaurant does not have the time to walk people through real-life experience. People who work in her kitchen, which is smaller than a hotel or larger restaurant, need to be able to hit the ground running, she said, and the experience of working in a fast-paced kitchen is an expectation.

Davila added that larger kitchens may be a better fit for people who come out of these training programs because there’s more opportunities to hone those skills and further an individual’s experience in a working environment.

Honey Butter Fried Chicken, which office manager Katie Boyd describes as a medium-sized restaurant with 50 employees, has hired one student from Silver Fork. Boyd said Honey Butter Fried Chicken heard of the program because the owners were friends with Pederson. Boyd said the student has been a great hire and has been able to hit the ground running since he started two months ago.

“It’s really refreshing to have a new hire who is super gun-ho and ready to dive in with our businesses practices,” Boyd said. “We always say that we will give our employees 100 percent of what they need to succeed if they give us 100 percent of their energy in return.”



CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS

Chef Nicole Pederson, right, and student Tatianna Adams season pork for the Silver Fork culinary program graduation meal at the Center on Halsted in Chicago last month. Silver Fork is a nine-week culinary arts and job readiness program coupled with service training and career counseling.

WEEKEND: MUSIC



Bringing out ‘the basher’

Nick Lowe rediscovers rock ‘n’ roll roots with Los Straitjackets

BY DAVID BAUDER
Associated Press

Four men who wear Mexican wrestling masks onstage have reacquainted singer Nick Lowe with his rock ‘n’ roll roots.

The British composer of “Cruel to Be Kind” and “(What’s So Funny ‘Bout) Peace, Love and Understanding” was deep into the country squire phase of his career a few years back, performing mostly acoustically. The death of drummer Bobby Irwin took an emotional toll on Lowe, leading to the dissolution of his band.

He’s 69 years old now, the shock of hair completely white. He can still write meticulously-crafted pop songs and perform them with sweetness and subtlety. Yet as the years went by, it became easier to forget Lowe’s nickname was once “the basher” for tear-down-the-house

rock shows (some alcohol required) and a get-it-done-quickly recording style. Enter Los Straitjackets.

The Nashville-based quartet is a rarity, an instrumental rock band who recall the Ventures and Raybeats, and perform onstage in matching suits and unmatching masks. Your first instinct is to laugh, until the power and personality of the music takes over.

They also share Lowe’s record company and manager, who suggested they get together when the singer needed a band for a tour supporting a holiday album. A more enduring partnership was forged.

“Like everybody else, I couldn’t believe it when they put on their masks and changed into suits,” Lowe said. “But now I’m totally used to it. The way we play together now, it actually feels like I’m in the band.”

With the Straitjackets’ push, Lowe has pulled chestnuts like “So It Goes,”

“Heart of the City” and Rockpile’s “When I Write the Book” from his catalog, reclaiming ownership of songs he’d largely left in the past.

Collaborating was an easy “yes” for the Straitjackets, who are longtime fans and recently released an album with instrumental versions of Lowe’s songs.

“We had nothing to lose,” said founding guitarist Eddie Angel. “He had his credibility on the line going onstage with four guys in wrestling masks. He really did take a chance on us. He wasn’t sure how his fans would react.”

There were initial wrinkles. When they started rehearsals, the Straitjackets acted like a side band supporting a frontman. Lowe told them instead to learn the basic material and perform it like they were Straitjackets’ songs and he would join in.

During a recent show in Daryl Hall’s club in Pawling, N.Y., Lowe and the

band played two sets together, wrapped around an interlude when the Straitjackets performed alone, including a cover of Lowe’s “Lately I’ve Let Things Slide” and their goofy rendition of the “Batman” theme.

“We’re like a lightning rod for the silliness, so he can do what he wants,” Angel said.

They’ve teamed in the studio as well, for a four-song EP led with the cut “Tokyo Bay,” and made more recordings since then.

From his onstage demeanor alone, it’s clearly been a blast for Lowe.

“They’re a right handful, as well,” he said. “It’s not like I’m touring with a bunch of old cronies. It does feel natural to me, because they’ve got such a swing and rhythm. It’s not just a hammering. I love the way they play when they play my stuff and I feel really, really lucky.”

Nick Lowe and Los Straitjackets turned a holiday tour into a full-fledged collaboration that has helped Lowe rediscover chestnuts from his catalog.

Courtesy of Shore Fire Media

Isbell looks inward in examining ‘White Man’s World’

BY RANDY LEWIS
Los Angeles Times

Singer-songwriter Jason Isbell grew up in Green Hills, Ala., often hearing sentiments coming from his radio extolling the virtues of the good old days, of small-town America, of times that seemed simpler and happier through the rear-view mirror of history.

He took a different tack while

writing songs for his acclaimed 2017 album “The Nashville Sound.” Several songs broached topics that are exceptionally touchy for many in country’s predominantly white, rural audience, and even more fearsome for radio programmers who try to avoid controversy at all costs.

The most noteworthy might have been “White Man’s World,” in which Isbell, one of the most critically lauded singers and songwriters of the

new millennium, didn’t overtly rail against perceived injustices. Instead, he raised questions about his own life experience, about the privileges he’s enjoyed, where those privileges came from and who paid what price to create them.

“I’m a white man living on a white man’s street / I’ve got the bones of the red man under my feet / The highway runs through their burial grounds / Past the oceans of cotton,” Isbell, 39,

sings in “White Man’s World.”

He continues, “I’m a white man looking in a black man’s eyes / Wishing I’d never been one of the guys / Who pretended not to hear another white man’s joke/ Oh, the times man’s stuff and I feel really, really lucky.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 37

Courtesy of All Eyes Media



WEEKEND: MUSIC REVIEWS

**Jim James**

Uniform Distortion (ATO Records)

My Morning Jacket frontman Jim James offers his musings on love, life and the hazards of our social-media-driven modern world on his fourth solo record, the rocking "Uniform Distortion."

With driving guitar riffs and catchy hooks combined with his signature soaring vocals, James delivers an utterly engaging, hard-charging, straight-ahead record that almost feels like a throwback to a different era while also being very much current.

Or, as he sings on "Out of Time": "I'm either behind the times or ahead of the times or maybe I'm just out of time, out of luck."

It's hard not to get sucked in.

Who can't relate to the first single, "Just a Fool," when James sings, "Just a fool getting by / Just a fool doing all right."

On "Throwback," James mixes nostalgia for a world before we were all connected, whether we like it or not, through our social media accounts.

"Scroll back in time through your account / Watch your face grow younger as real time runs out / Throwback Thursday to the way that it was / When we were young," he sings.

The record's title, "Uniform Distortion," couples perfectly with the cover image taken from a 1971 "Whole Earth Catalog" showing a person hidden behind what appears to be a blinding light. Considered together with the music, it sends the message that all of us, and everything around us, is distorted.

The question James grapples with, and that listeners are left to ponder, is what are we going to do about it?

— Scott Bauer
Associated Press

**Carolina Story**Lay Your Head Down
(Black River Americana)

Ben Roberts comes from Arkansas, his wife Emily is from South Dakota, and they met in Memphis a decade ago. But Nashville was always their destiny.

The couple's debut album, "Lay Your Head Down," pulsates with achy, heartfelt sentiment, delivered in tender harmony against a warmly pastoral background.

For nearly 10 years, the duo said yes to every gig request, performing in nursing homes, churches and bars. The response was encouraging, but success was not immediate.

Still, talent this big is hard to keep down. Several odd jobs and two babies later, it landed them a record deal.

On the opening title cut, a mournful train whistle of a harmonica lays the groundwork for Ben's plaintive tenor.

"Springtime came with a vengeance this year, the river rose high, the water ain't clear," he sings in words composed on the banks of the Cumberland River. But it isn't until Emily adds harmony on the second verse that the voltage of their voices joined together takes command.

It's possible, maybe even probable, that these gentle songs won't rise to the top of the country charts. But they will find their way onto many a mellow playlist. And if they had emerged under the names of, say, Tim McGraw and Faith Hill, surely Nashville would have dropped to its knees.

The thing is, this isn't the kind of music that's written with stardom in mind. These songs feel like they had to come out.

— Scott Stroud
Associated Press

**Cowboy Junkies**

All That Reckoning (Latent Recordings)

Cowboy Junkies return from "All That Reckoning," one of the best albums of their extended career. Occasionally ramping up the quiet, haunting sounds of "The Trinity Sessions," their 1988 classic, with doses of tougher arrangements and topical themes, the three Timmins siblings and bassist Alan Anton again perform up to their high standards.

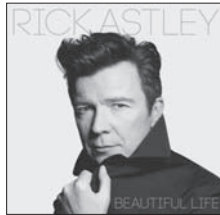
"All That Reckoning" is love at first listen, that's instantly accessible, likable and memorable without merely trying to repeat old triumphs.

Guitarist-songwriter Michael Timmins says the reckoning is both personal and political and the title track launching the album with the Junkies' trademark reverberations is definitely in the personal realm — "You took my heart and softly asked for more." Others in that category are "Wooden Stairs," "Shining Teeth" and "The Possessed." "The Things We Do to Each Other" reflects the wider context, a song about manipulation and power. "Fear is not so far from hate / So if you get the folks to fear / It only takes one small twist / To kick it up a gear." Another peak is "When We Arrive," which combines individual and ideological issues.

Vocalist Margo Timmins exalts on both the intimate and the communal songs. Even on the louder tracks, like "Missing Children" and "Sing Me a Song," she's never shrill but never drowned out, either, as the Canadian band expertly maintains its balance.

More than 30 years into their career, Cowboy Junkies are in peak form, adding another inspired, alluring album to their repertoire.

— Pablo Gorondi
Associated Press

**Rick Astley**

Beautiful Life (BMG)

Rick Astley rick-rolled the world two years ago when he resurfaced with a very good album, his first new music in 23 years. The record, which became a jokey internet meme proved a master crafter of pop songs. Now he's proved that wasn't a fluke.

The soulful Englishman with the bouffant hair who sang "Never Gonna Give You Up" in the 1980s delivers again on another dozen tracks of his up-tempo, easygoing-down mix of blue-eyed soul, gospel and dance.

Like "50" in 2016, Astley wrote and produced "Beautiful Life" alone and performs all the instruments. There's only one other person who is all over the new album: That would be Lene Bausager, Astley's wife. Virtually every song celebrates their love. (If that's not who he's singing about, he's in some serious trouble at home.)

Astley just wants to boogie on "Chance to Dance" and wants to be kissed hard on "Last Night on Earth." His lover gives him a "fear of wanting you too much" on "Every Corner," "gives me light" on "She Makes Me" and prompts him to "want to run down to the edge of the river singing" on "Shivers."

The album ends with "The Good Old Days," which is stuffed with allusions to other bands. "A super tramp will sing for me / A full beggar's banquet" — as Astley celebrates the tunes he was raised on.

"Someone saved my life every single night / When the words and the music played / When the fiddlers took me away," he sings. It's a fitting song for this pop survivor to conclude with, a clever valentine to music itself.

— Mark Kennedy
Associated Press

FROM PAGE 36

Stephen Poster's 19th century paean to what he perceived to be the glories of the Old South.

The song, Isbell told *The Times* last year, was inspired by 2016's presidential election.

He was talking inside one of his favorite places to perform, Nashville's historic Ryman Auditorium, often referred to as "the mother church of country music." It's a landmark with its own complicated history. Today's visitors can still see signs that once informed African Americans where they were allowed to sit — and where they weren't — when audiences decades ago at the Ryman were still segregated.

"I think as a society we're still making a lot of progress," said Isbell, sitting in one of the upstairs pews. "I think just as many people or more people are getting treated unfairly by law enforcement [today] as there

were 20, 30 or 40 years ago. We just find out more about it now."

But he has noticed a change since the election of President Donald Trump, largely in how people perceive the country itself, and felt the need to say something.

"When something like this happens, when somebody is put on this particular pedestal that Trump has been put upon — partially by Americans, partially by the process — it's easy to look at it and say we're failing, and that this movement of compassion is losing to people who are so afraid it makes them selfish. It's very easy to say that and think that. I think we may have gone down a couple of rungs on a ladder we've already climbed a long way on."

And yet, he continued, "I feel like a lot of people are confusing falling a couple of rungs with falling off the ladder. I feel like as a songwriter, I'm not a huge star, I'm not a celebrity, I'm not

'I'm not a huge star, I'm not a celebrity, I'm not going to have the ability to sway a lot of people. But if 200,000 people buy this record and 50 of them start thinking a little bit differently because of that song, or another song, then I feel like I've done my job.'

singer-songwriter
Jason Isbell

On his song "White Man's World"

going to have the ability to sway a lot of people. But if 200,000 people buy this record and 50 of them start thinking a little bit differently because of that song, or another song, then I feel like I've done my job."

"The Nashville Sound" spent six weeks on the Billboard country album and peaked at No. 1, but his "White Man's World" received little or no airplay on mainstream country radio stations, even though Isbell is one of the most popular artists in the world of Americana radio and consistently performs sold-out shows.

"I do think part of my job is to let people know where I stand on those kinds of issues and to defend people who aren't white males like I am," he said. "To defend my child, my wife, my friends who are afraid for themselves right now."

Isbell often performs with his wife, singer-songwriter and violinist Amanda Shires, who is part

of his band the 400 Unit and will release her fifth studio album in August.

"I'm not afraid right now," said Isbell, who recently announced a new series of fall shows at the Ryman and in October will release "Live From the Ryman." "I'm the person who's benefiting from most of the tax cuts and the new healthcare plan. I'm the guy who could afford healthcare no matter what the new plan says. But it still drives me nuts on behalf of other people."

"I'm not going to get kicked out of the country," Isbell added. "I'm 15th-generation American. But the fact that people pay me for my opinion — and they do, whether they realize it or not, that's what you're paying for, whether you buy a ticket to a show or whether you buy a record — I think it makes me responsible. I can't stay completely silent on those things."

'Great Revolt' offers insight into Trump support

Their book shifts from chapters looking

In a campaign like no other, Trump boasted about his abilities, made bold predictions, talked about creating jobs and promised to get out of international treaties, cut immigration and protect struggling industries. Most important, he took his campaign directly to these people who desperately wanted the attention and promises of help. The Hillary Clinton

When Trump returns to campaign themes about trade, immigration and "America first," he has these people firmly in mind — in states like Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Iowa and Wisconsin. The question of whether he has permanently reshaped America's politics is central to

The roughly 40 percent of the population that supports Trump is unwavering and includes many residents of the Upper Midwest who were long a critical part of Democrats' path to national victory. Winning them back from Trump will be no easy task.



WEEKEND: TELEVISION & DVD

NEW ON DVD

"Isle of Dogs": Describing the Wes Anderson animated film does it no justice because the only way to fully appreciate this production is to experience it on multiple levels. At the heart is the story of 12-year-old Atari Kobayashi (voiced by Koyu Rankin), the ward of the massively corrupt Mayor Kobayashi (Kunichi Nomura). Taking advantage of an overpopulation of sick dogs, the mayor decrees that all the canine pets of Megasaki City are to be exiled to a vast garbage dump. The action seems to be in regards to public safety but is the end result of centuries of bad blood. Atari flies to Trash Island in search of his bodyguard dog, Spots (Liev Schreiber), the first canine sent into the trash island exile. With the assistance of a pack of newly found mongrel friends, Atari begins a journey through this junkyard of failed adventures and misguided endeavors that will decide the fate and future of the entire prefecture. "Isle of Dogs" can be enjoyed as a simple story or as a complicated metaphor for life. Being able to pull off such diverse story elements coupled with the dazzling look is a reminder that while we might think Anderson has shown us his best, he continues to produce work that takes filmmaking to an even higher level.

"Rampage": Even in a movie that is based so thinly on a popular arcade game, Dwayne Johnson continues to prove he is the biggest action star of the 21st century. Without Johnson, "Rampage" would be just a notch above those smash-up monster creature features that appear on cable, where it could have been called "Wolfbatsaurus" or "Crocopine." If all you want is to see a lot of buildings fall and people get chomped, "Rampage" is the film that will tide you over until a better movie comes along.



STX/AP

Aidy Bryant, left, Busy Philipps and Amy Schumer in a scene from "I Feel Pretty," now on DVD.

Also available on DVD:

"I Feel Pretty": A confident leaves a woman (Amy Schumer) with a new look on life.

"Truth or Dare": A simple game turns deadly for a group of friends.

"The Expanse: Season Three": A potential battle between Earth and Mars could have a major impact on all humanity.

"The Good Place: Season Two": Kristen Bell and Ted Danson star in the NBC comedy that deals with the afterlife.

"Pitch: The Complete Series": Short-lived Fox series about the first woman to play major league baseball.

"1/11": Young woman re-evaluates her life when she gets pregnant.

"Frontline: Trafficked in America": An examination of Central America teens are smuggled into the U.S. with a promise of a better life but end up forced into slavery to pay off their debt.

"Disobedience": Rachel Weisz and Rachel McAdams star in this story of a woman who returns to the community that exiled her only to find she must continue to hide her desires.

"Super Troopers 2": Vermont highway patrolmen must deal with an international border dispute that arises between the U.S. and Canada.

— Rick Bentley/Tribune News Service



DISNEY JUNIOR/AP

Nancy and her mother, Claire Clancey, voiced by Alyson Hannigan, are characters in the animated series "Fancy Nancy."

Alyson Hannigan plays TV mom to glitter-loving 'Fancy Nancy'

By LYNN ELBER
Associated Press

Alyson Hannigan is clear about why she pursued a role on the "Fancy Nancy" TV series: Her daughters, ages 6 and 9.

Hannigan said there's a "love affair" between her family and the books by Jane O'Connor and Robin Preiss Glasser about a girl who doesn't believe in plain-wrap anything, especially words.

Hannigan was so intent on joining the Disney Junior animated series the extravagant Nancy that she called her agent and said she'd take any role, including that of Frenchy the dog. She was picked instead to play mom Claire (opposite Rod Riggle's dad Doug), adding another animated project to her varied list that includes "Robot Chicken," "American Dad!" and "Kim Possible."

Hannigan spoke with the AP about the series and shared a tongue-in-cheek scheme to revive the 2005-14 sitcom "How I Met Your Mother," in which she played Lily.

Remarks have been edited for clarity and brevity.

What's the appeal of the Fancy Nancy books?

Hannigan: I like the fact that it's a vocabulary lesson disguised in a very charming story. I immediately saw my (older) daughter starting to use bigger words and fancier vocabulary. She still loves language, and so that was wonderful. And it celebrates how passionate Nancy is for all the wonderful things in her world, and how her imagination is so vivid. And I love that it captures what childhood should be.



Hannigan — shown during a recording session for her role as Claire — is known for roles on "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "How I Met Your Mother."

Why did you decide to do voice as well as on-screen acting?

I have always wanted to do cartoons. Joss Whedon, the creator of "Buffy," once said, "I think if we just cut you open, a cartoon would pop out." I've done guest spots here and there, but, honestly, I think becoming a mom and reading to my kids every night really sort of made me figure out doing voices.

Does the series echo those themes?

It's got such a good message. It's all about kids being kids, in an authentic way, and learning valuable lessons without it being preachy at all — just celebrating individual style and everything that the imagination can hold. It really celebrates being a unique kid.

Do you approach voicing an animated character differently when it's based on a book rather than created for the screen?

The family is very relatable to me, so I wasn't intimidated by these characters already out there. The mom is relatable because she's a stay-at-home mom with two kids and she's up for all the art projects. I'm sure there's always a layer of glitter everywhere no matter how much she cleans, because she celebrates the kids' imagination and enthusiasm for all the projects they get themselves into.

How much glitter would be found in her home?

Oh, there's so much. I've been relegated to the guesthouse with my glitter because I have an extensive collection, and the kids and I definitely craft up a storm. Glitter, glue, fabrics, lots of pom-poms. My house could also pass as a Michael's store.

"How I Met Your Mother" wrapped up neatly, but would you like to see it somehow join the comedy revivals trend?

I would love it. That was such a wonderful place to go to work every day and such a great group. But my (producers Carter Bays and Craig Thomas) might have blown it because they did so many flash-forwards at the end of the series. And I'm like, "Oh, no, we can't do reunion shows because you told everybody what happened." But hey, never say never. I would definitely be on board if that happened.

Have you been approached about it?

No. But my pitch is that we just do it all over again. Somebody narrates it and says, "No, no, no, kids. That's that's how it happened. I'll tell you the real way," and then we can just do the whole show over.

WEEKEND: HEALTH & FITNESS



Participants pound a punching bag under colored strobe lights during a Spicy Boxing class at WeThrive Fitness gym in Monticello, Minn., in May.



PHOTOS BY DAVE SCHWARZ, ST. CLOUD (MINN.) TIMES/AP

Spicy Boxing class members can burn about 300 calories in 30 minutes, according to Hallie Leffingwell, owner of WeThrive Fitness gym.

HOT WORKOUT

Spicy Boxing heats up Minn. fitness scene by combining kickboxing and Latin music

By MICK HATTEN

St. Cloud (Minn.) Times

The idea came from a problem Hallie Leffingwell was having when she was a competitive kickboxer.

"When I was fighting, I was often told I was robotic in my movements," she said. "So they told me to listen to Latin music when I was working out. I couldn't help but move my hips, and it would help me flow a little bit better with my movements."

Leffingwell said listening to the music was a lot of fun.

"I thought, 'If I can enjoy it, everyone else would, too.' I had some people help me choreograph a class and the members of my gym absolutely love it," she said.

Leffingwell was a kickboxer who worked out at the St. Cloud Boxing & Wrestling Club. She has owned the WeThrive Fitness gym in Monticello since December of 2014. The class she helped create with the help of fitness dance and classic dance instructors is called Spicy Boxing.

"It's been going about six months and classes are three days a week and there's two classes each day," Leffingwell said. "We break it up into rounds. For six weeks, we use the same music and the same choreography, so they get to know the songs and get to know the moves, and we up the intensity as they go."

A person can burn about 300 calories in a half-hour, she said.

"You leave just drenched," Leffingwell said. "It's fantastic."

OK, so let's get into some specifics.

There is a room in the gym that has 10 100-pound heavy bags that hang from the ceiling, each about 6 feet apart. The room is typically dark with only dance machine lights on as mostly Latin music is played.

Wearing boxing gloves, the members of the class punch and kick the heavy bag with dance moves thrown in between to well, spice things up, with a trainer instructing them.

"It's way more high energy than most

workouts, and it doesn't feel like you're working out," said Danielle Carlson, of Clearwater, Minn.

Danelle Weismann of Becker is a certified personal trainer and recently tried Spicy Boxing for the first time. Since she tried it, she's been trying to convince others to give it a go.

"I like the fact that it's in the dark with the lights down because it makes you more comfortable," Weismann said. "It's geared for all ages and sizes, and you get a little dance in there ... I love kicking and hitting the bag. You can get mean and aggressive, and then they calm you down with the dancing."

The other thing Weismann said she likes about the class is the cost. It is \$10 for non-gym members per class. It is free for those who have WeThrive Fitness gym memberships.

"It's super cheap," she said. "I looked into other boxing places, and the workouts are very expensive. ... The lights are off during the workouts, so for older women or for women just getting into working out, you just want to feel comfortable."

The gym also offers boot camp workouts, strength training, yoga, meditation and wellness training with certified trainers.

Leffingwell, 33, said she is looking to expand where Spicy Boxing is offered.

"We're turning spicy boxing into a licensed class," she said. "We're training people to teach it."

Leffingwell said she has more than 75 clients who have tried the program. She also said that people should not be intimidated by the variety of moves involved.

"The kicks are not very hard, and the tempo of the class requires a lighter kick," she said. "There's a lot of squats and a lot of cardio exercises, and you move with the music."

"I outsourced the instructor because I know what I'm strong at, and I'm not strong at dancing. Our dance instructors have that background, and if they are trying something too tough, I tell them to simplify it."



Dhani Adler leads a Spicy Boxing class in May. The class is free for WeThrive Fitness members or \$10 for nonmembers.



The workout room is kept dark, with the exception of light emitted from the dance machine, so that patrons won't be bothered by those around them.

WEEKEND: FAMILY

By HEIDI STEVENS
Chicago Tribune

Cheryl Judice knew her book would be met with some skepticism.

She wrote it anyway. "Interracial Relationships Between Black Women and White Men" tells the stories of black women who are dating, married to or divorced from white men. She interviewed 60 women and men about their relationships — the highs, the lows, whether and when race factored into those highs and lows, who dated on the date outside their race, how their families received their partners, how they were received by their partners' families.

It's an academic approach, but with a clearly stated mission at heart.

It is my hope," Judice, a sociology professor at Northwestern University, writes, "that presenting their stories will cause more black women to intentionally seek to broaden their idea of suitable dating and marriage partners."

The conversation, she said, is long overdue and not easy to have.

"What I'm bringing up, for many people, is very sensitive," Judice told me. "They're like, 'Why are you putting that out there?' Because I'm tired of people being so miserable, that's why."

Miserable, she said, meaning single when they'd prefer to be partnered. Discussions with her black female friends, black female students on campus and black female audience members at various panels often turned to the women's difficulty finding partners.

The book, Judice said, is not intended to dismiss black men as loving, suitable partners. Although she's certainly heard that criticism.

"I say, 'I have no intentions to diminish African-American men,'" Judice said. "There simply are not enough of you."

Black females begin to outnumber black males by age 16, Judice writes, partly as a result of high mortality and incarceration rates that Judice said result from systematic discrimination against black males.

Black men are also twice as likely as black women to marry outside their race, she writes. Black women are, in fact, the least likely group of women to marry outside their race. Judice first became interested in the topic after spending time with black families around her in Evanston, Ill. As children and teens, the girls and the boys often hung out with groups that were racially and ethnically diverse. After their teen years ended, she observed, their social experiences took dramatically different turns.

By their late 20s and early 30s, she writes, most of them had graduated from college and started their careers. Many were dating.

"But it was only the black males who were engaged or had married," she writes. "Their black female counterparts were single, an often-voiced concern and the subject of conversation, particularly among their mothers."

"Many of the black mothers," she writes, expressed their frustration about the dating and marriage prospects of their daughters, while the black mothers with sons noted that



No limits

Professor wants black women to feel free to look for love outside their race

the males were pursued by women from various racial/ethnic groups."

Conversations with middle-class black families in other parts of the country, she writes, matched her Chicago-area observations.

Several of the women Judice interviewed for the book, however, told stories of being pursued by white men. "I just went out with who asked me out because I am traditional enough to not ask a guy out first," a woman called Cathy (all names were changed for the book) told Judice. In college, Cathy said, those guys tended to be white.

Judice hopes the stories in her book inspire more black women and white men to do the same.

"If we don't talk about it, it's always going to be the elephant in the room," she said. "I'm looking at a core issue of how people really think. I'm not blaming anybody for anything. I'm not casting anybody as a victim. I'm just saying, 'Let's look at a life where people are free from some of the things that have shackled us for so long.'"

Free from them, but not ignorant of them. She discusses, in the book, the history of white men exploiting and abusing black women and explores whether that history weaves its way into her interviewees' dating choices and experiences. The historical and modern-day power differential is, in fact, what led her to limit the book to black women and white men, rather than black women and all nonblack men (Latino men, Asian men, etc.).

"As a sociologist, it was interesting for me to discover how and why relationships between the group highest in the social hierarchy — white men — and the group lowest in the social hierarchy — black women — occurred," she writes.

Judice is African-American, and she's married to an African-American man. Her family, though, is

filled with marriages across racial and ethnic lines. Her five siblings all married outside their race, and she can trace the first interracial marriage in her family to 1930.

Her grandmother's nephew, Louis, fell in love with Angeline, an Italian woman he met at an integrated church in St. Paul, Minn. The congregation was divided, Judice said, upon the news of Louis and Angeline's romance, and relatives encouraged Louis to leave town.

He moved to Chicago to live with his aunt, Judice's grandmother, and Angeline followed him.

"My grandmother used to say, 'Angeline, right now you think you're so in love, but how are you going to feel if you have little brown-skinned children running around calling you Mama?'" Judice said. "And Angeline, with her feisty self, looked at my grandmother and said, 'Aunt Cannie, I don't care about that. And the darker they are, the better I'll love them.' They got married a few weeks later, in my grandmother's living room at 51st and Wabash."

Judice hopes readers are ready to hear her message, and the stories of the women and men she interviewed. We just swooned, after all, over a royal wedding between a black woman and a white prince.

"Prince Harry was born the day my husband and I got married," Judice said. "Meghan Markle, in addition to the Northwestern connection, grew up and went to the same high school as my California cousins." (Markle graduated from Northwestern University in 2003.)

"I thought, 'If I'm ever going to finish this book, let me do it now, while there's public interest in interracial relationships.'"

"I can only hope the book is received in the manner it was intended," she said, "and that it will start a different conversation, one that we haven't really had."

THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari

Totally tubular: Summer memories

You can call me Parent of the Year. I just gave my 17-year-old daughter permission to go cliff diving with her friends at a rocky outcrop overlooking the bay.

As counterintuitive as this might seem for a parent, I smile when my children seek out the kind of old-fashioned, risky fun I had when I was a kid. Back before the internet made screens our main focus in life, we spent summers trying to figure out what to do for entertainment. Swimming holes, rope swings, junkyards and bridges were hot spots, but in a pinch, abandoned shopping carts, appliance boxes and other household objects would also do the trick.

One summer in the 1970s, my older brother scored two large inner tubes. He called his friend, Tracy, to come over to help him figure out what to do with them. Tracy was in junior high school and wanted nothing to do with little sisters like me. So, I trotted barefoot up the hill to the neighbor's backyard playhouse, picking newly-sprouted dandelions along the way.

About an hour later, there was a knock at the playhouse door.

"Hey, Lisa! Come here! Wanna do something fun with me and Tracy?"

Flabbergasted by this unusual turn of events, I threw the baby doll I was nurturing into the spider-webbed corner and ran out the door: "Whaddya wanna do?!" I yelled excitedly.

Tracy and Tray led me to the side of the neighbors' house where I saw the inner tubes lashed together, side by side, with twine. Grinning sideways at each other and down at me, my brother said, "Lisa, if you climb inside the tubes, we'll roll you down the hill and it'll be really fun!"

I couldn't see red flags or hear alarm bells. All I knew is that my big brother finally wanted to play with me.

I crouched down and climbed into the center hole, gripping the metal valves like handles just as they instructed. With my chin on my chest and my legs criss-crossed, I fit snugly into the tiny space. Assuming me that the ride would be better than the Scrambler at the county fair, they shoved me off down the hill.

As the tubes took their first few rotations, I squealed with excitement. But then, I reached the dropoff at the front of the neighbors' property, and the cylinder spun wildly with the sudden acceleration. The natural undulations of the lawn sent the tubes airborne, causing them to change shape as they bounced on the ground. The circle distorted into an elongated oval with each impact, and my teeth clacked.

As the contraption flew down the hill toward a border of blue spruces, my initial squeals of delight turned into breathy screams of terror, and then into the silence of survival mode. From my cramped vantage point, I could see flashes of blue sky, the approaching spruces, grass, and Tracy and Tracy screaming down the hill after me.

I knew I had to save myself from certain disaster. As I slammed into the ground after a particularly high bounce, I allowed my foot to pop out of the ring. My toes immediately caught the grass, flipping the tubes like a quarter in a coin toss.

My wheel of terror teetered to a stop just before the spruces, and I burst out of the confining hole onto the grass. The entire episode spun around me. I could hear faint yelling coming closer, until Tracy's silhouette appeared against the blue sky above me.

"Lisa! Lisa! Are you okay?!" Tracy panted, as a drop of spit began to ooze from his gaping mouth. Just before the elongating globule could detach itself, Tracy slurped and swallowed in the nick of time.

As the summers passed, my brother continued to bait me into painful pain flips, terrifying locked closets and harebrained schemes, and I also found plenty of trouble all on my own. And now, as my teenage daughter goes to jump off cliffs, I say a little prayer that no one breaks an arm, I accept the natural order of the world, and I understand that some things never change.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com

Northwestern sociology professor Cheryl Judice (not pictured above), author of "Interracial Relationships Between Black Women and White Men," says the subject matter isn't easy, but the conversation is long overdue.

DREAMSTIME/TNS

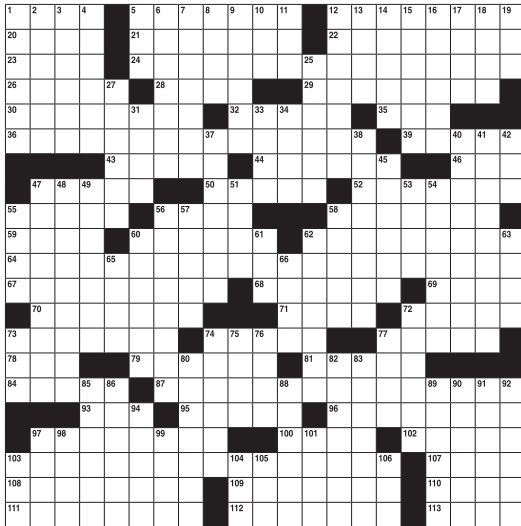
WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

COMPLIMENTARY

BY SAM EZERSKY AND BYRON WALDEN / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

- ACROSS**
- 1 Iams competitor
5 Pretend
12 Song sung by Garth Brooks on last Leno's lay "Tonight Show"
20 Podcast host Maron
21 Fred Flintstone's boss
22 Weathers, as a hurricane
23 "That's me you're looking for"
24 Compliment to a lawmaker?
26 Lesley who played Mrs. Patmore on "Downton Abbey"
28 ____ the sly (he secretive about)
29 Drug used to combat A.D.H.D.
30 Short writing assignment, informally
32 Really like
33 Really like
36 Compliment to a composer?
39 ____ voice
43 Deep, deep hole
44 Crème de deo
46 Lucky strike?
47 Toe, to a tot
50 John, Paul or George, but not Ringo
52 Alternative to first class
- 55 Lake vessel
56 Water cooler?
58 Cornbread variety named for where it's baked
59 Film role for the dog Skippy
60 Meditative discipline
62 Compliment to a lecturer?
64 Compliment to a taxonomist?
67 Compliment to a champion speller?
68 Smallville
69 2002 Literature Nobelist Kertész
70 Snack with a rock climber on its wrapper
71 Head of communications?
72 Gettysburg general
73 Like many holiday candles
74 Gal of "Wonder Woman"
77 Banned game projectiles
78 [not my mistake]
79 "Why, you little ..."
81 Word with prayer or paddle
84 Claim in e-cigarette ads
87 Compliment to a charity organizer?
93 Dorn V.I.P.s
95 Major exporter of uranium
96 Hand-to-hand combat weapon
97 Long lines?
- 100 Athlete honored on Richmond's Monument Avenue
102 Drained of color
103 Compliment to a vegetable gardener?
107 What the "S" stands for in "scuba"
108 Enhanced medium for talk radio
109 Draw upon
110 "____ Enchanted" (2004 film)
111 Result of a computer crash
112 Got back at, in the car
113 Difficult situation
- DOWN**
- 1 Key of Mozart's "Odense" Symphony
2 Thin layer
3 ____ to sell
4 Color-changing creatures
5 "Yo to ____" (Spanish 101 phrase)
6 How boors behave
7 Some inclement weather, in broadcast shorthand
8 "Oh, by the way ..."
9 GPS system, e.g.
10 Suffix with señor
11 Bog
12 Weapon resembling the letter psi
13 Posterior
14 Beat after a buzzer beater
15 Rubbish
16 Alternative to Parmesan
- 17 Chuck ____, four-time Super Bowl-winning coach
18 Pick out
19 Uranians and Neptunians
25 Lack the courage to, for short
27 Musical set in St.-Tropez, familiarly
31 Actress Hoffmann of "Transparent"
33 Half: Prefix
34 What dark clouds might represent
37 Small bone, as in the ear
38 Quai D'Orsay setting
40 Prepared to shoot
41 Beings on TV's "Doctor Who"
42 West Coast beer brand, informally
45 Modern payment option
47 Musical medley
48 Wits
49 Not hold back, to a poker player
51 Ottoman title
53 Twice tetra-
54 More sharply dressed
55 Container for amollonado
56 Easternmost of the Lesser Antilles
57 Kitchen device
58 Meriting only half a star, say
60 French city where D'Artagnan lived in "The Three Musketeers"
61 MSN, for one
62 B on an LP
63 Site for an A.C.L. tear
65 Took off
66 Words said before bed?
72 Peace Nobelist Youssafai
73 ID card fig.
74 Lose rigidity
75 Not worth ____
- 76 Florida's Miami-____ County
77 Lightsaber wielder
80 Worlds external to the mind
82 Activity in libraries and movie theaters
83 Diplomatic agreement
85 Record label for Whitney Houston
86 One of the friends on "Friends"
88 Milkshake, in New England
89 Author Gerritsen and actress Harper
90 What one might seek after a computer crash, informally
91 Opera with the aria "Ave Maria"
92 Skim
94 Vice President Agnew
97 Stone that's a star
98 It may be checked
99 Tilt section
101 Scrape
103 Crestfallen
104 Tony winner Hagen
105 Dallas hooper, briefly
106 Roll on a golf course

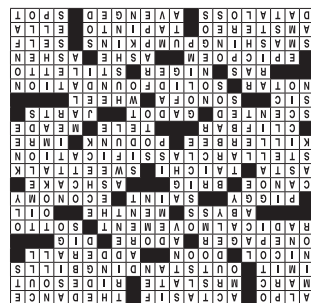


GUNSTON STREET



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FACES

Negative reactions:
Celeb jokes fly after
Trump's walk-back

The Washington Post

The jokes basically wrote themselves after President Donald Trump asserted Tuesday he had mistakenly used the word "would" instead of "wouldn't" during widely-criticized remarks about whether Russia sought to interfere with the U.S. presidential election.

On Twitter, Richard Marx offered that he too mispoke — in his romantic 1989 ballad "Right Here Waiting": "I mispoke. I meant to say I 'wouldn't' be right here waiting for you."

Others have issued corrections that drastically alter important pop culture moments. Darth Vader meant to say he is not Luke's father. The Proclaimers wouldn't walk 500 miles (or 500 more, for that matter). Meat Loaf wouldn't do anything for love. And so on.

And, as noted by The Wrap, "Simpsons" fans couldn't resist referencing the scene where Smithers tells Mr. Burns that a booing audience isn't booing his film, but rather "saying boo-urns."

Tuesday night's "Jimmy Kimmel Live" took a more instructional approach, tapping "Sesame Street's" Grover to explain the difference between would and wouldn't in a scathing segment.

"I'm Donald Trump, and when I'm in America, I say 'I don't see any reason why Russia wouldn't interfere in the election,'" Grover said. "Then I go all the way to Russia. I say, 'I don't see don't see any reason Russia would interfere in the election.'"

The Muppet character became exasperated after making the figurative trip to Russia (and having to deal with the corresponding changes between would and wouldn't). "When I'm with Putin, I say would because I am a coward," he yelled.

Shepard tries talking

Well-rounded Hollywood figure starts podcast

By ALICIA RANCILIO

Associated Press



Dax Shepard is now hosting a podcast called "Armchair Expert."

AP

Dax Shepard acts, writes and directs, but his latest creative venture is fulfilling him in ways he didn't expect. He's begun recording podcasts called "Armchair Expert" in a guest house attic. New episodes drop Mondays.

Shepard said his experience as a guest on other podcasts sparked the idea of starting his own.

"I just really enjoyed being able to talk for an hour or two hours and not be confined to an 8-minute produced segment on a talk show," he said.

"We were able to veer off into much more profound or personal topics. And you felt like you had the time to give some context to your opinions."

Shepard's first episode was with his wife, actress Kristen Bell. He's since added conversations with celebs including Ellen DeGeneres and Jimmy Kimmel, and has branched out to experts of their fields, like a clinical psychologist who can talk about parenting strategies.

His wish list for guests is "never-ending," and the multi-hyphenate performer Donald Glover is No. 1.

Two episodes that stand out are with Shepard's mother, Laura Labo, and actress Erika Christensen. Labo was candid about overcoming toxic and abusive past relationships and facing loss after the recent death of her husband.

Christensen and Shepard played siblings for six seasons on NBC's "Parenthood." The two had a respectful conversation about Scientology (she is a member).

"There's so many topics in our culture that seem to be binary where you have to pick one side or the other, and Scientology certainly seems to be one of those," said Shepard. "I've certainly heard the side (against it), so I think it's required of me to hear the other perspective."

In his podcast, Shepard frequently refers to his own addiction to drugs and alcohol (he's now in recovery) and says "to create some equanimity, it's required of me to share something that's very vulnerable" to get others to feel they can do the same. He says he's especially interested in people's struggles and setbacks and what they've learned.

Chance the Rapper announces sale through song

Associated Press

Chance the Rapper says he has purchased the former news website Chicagoist, making the announcement in a new song.

The Chicago native released four songs on his website late Wednesday including "I Might Need Security," where he proclaims "I bought the Chicagoist." WNYC confirmed the acquisition in a statement.

The public radio station says Chance the Rapper's Social Media LLC purchased all of the Chicagoist's assets, including its archives, internet domain and social media channels.

WNYC bought Gothamist and its affiliated websites in February from billionaire Joe Ricketts, who shuttered the sites last November about a week after New York staffs voted to unionize.

In the statement released by WNYC, Chance says he plans to relaunch Chicagoist. He calls it "an integral local platform for Chicago news, events and entertainment."

'Brady Bunch' house for sale
for nearly \$1.9M

The home featured in the opening and closing scenes of "The Brady Bunch" is for sale for \$1.885 million.

Records show George and Violet McCallister bought the two-bedroom, three-bathroom split-level home in the Studio City neighborhood of Los Angeles in 1973 for \$61,000.

Real estate agent Ernie Carswell tells the Los Angeles Times the house has been updated and upgraded, but the interior layout does not resemble what was featured on the show, which ran from 1969 to 1974. Interior scenes were shot in a studio.

Carswell says a rock-wall fireplace, wood-paneled walls and floral wallpaper are vintage touches of what homes looked like in the 1970s.

The agent says the home attracts 30 to 50 visitors a day.

Jay-Z unhappy music fest is
leaving Philadelphia parkway

Jay-Z says he's disappointed Philadelphia is booting his annual "Made in America" music festival from the city's grandest boulevard.

The city says the festival isn't welcome on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway after this year. A city spokeswoman tells Philly.com the event originally was intended to attract people on a slow Labor Day weekend, but tourism growth means an event of that scale "may no longer be necessary."

In a Philadelphia Inquirer column Wednesday, Jay-Z accused Democratic Mayor Jim Kenney of having "zero appreciation for what Made In America has built."

Kenney said Wednesday he loves Jay-Z and wants to keep the show in Philadelphia. He says the city is looking at alternative sites.

Other news

■ Two new children's books will add pictures to the words of **John Lennon** and **Paul McCartney**. Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing announced Thursday that the series will begin with "All You Need Is Love," featuring illustrations by Marc Rosenthal. It comes out in January through the imprint Little Simon. The second book will be announced at a future date. Other picture books have been based on Beatles songs. In 2014, Ringo Starr collaborated with illustrator Ben Con on an adaptation of "Octopus's Garden."

■ **Gary Beach**, a Broadway and TV veteran whose portrayal of a truly terrible theater director in Mel Brooks' monster hit "The Producers" won him a Tony Award in 2001, died Tuesday at his home in Palm Springs, Calif., at age 70. No cause was given.

Springsteen's Broadway show
to air on Netflix in December

Glory days are ahead if you've wanted to see Bruce Springsteen's intimate one-man Broadway show but couldn't get tickets because they were sold out.

"Springsteen on Broadway," which earned the Boss a special Tony Award, was filmed for Netflix Tuesday and Wednesday, reports Playbill.com. It will begin streaming on Dec. 15, the show's closing night at the Walter Kerr Theatre.

The special was directed by Thom Zimny, who previously filmed documentaries for Springsteen albums "Born to Run," "Darkness on the Edge of Town" and "The River."

Originally set to run for eight weeks last fall, Springsteen's show featuring stories and acoustic-driven songs was extended to the end of this year.

The Daily News review called it "intimate and persuasive, satisfying and soul-stirring."

"The purpose of the film is to bring this incredibly intimate show to Bruce's entire audience intact and complete," says the star's manager, Jon Landau.

From The New York Daily News

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OPINION

Businesses suppressing wage growth

By MATT O'BRIEN

The Washington Post

The unemployment rate has fallen from 5 percent to 4 percent in the past two years, but workers aren't getting any bigger raises than they were before. What in the name of supply and demand is going on?

Well, the truth is, it's not clear. Part of it is probably that productivity growth has been so bad that you wouldn't expect wage growth to be that good no matter what. Another part is that there still seem to be a lot more people who want work than are officially looking for it. But the final part might be that employers are doing whatever they can, whether it's forcing morally dubious noncompetitive agreements onto workers or entering into legally dubious nonpoaching agreements themselves, to try to maintain their bargaining power in the face of lower unemployment.

Now, up until a few years ago, this last part was something we only knew about anecdotally. Companies don't exactly advertise that they're colluding against their workers. But as even sandwich shop employees, doggy day care workers and summer camp counselors have found themselves subject to noncompetes — which were originally aimed at preventing top executives from taking trade secrets to a rival, not locking minimum-wage workers into a state of semi-federal dependency — economists have begun to study the issue.

The Treasury Department, for one, has found that the most cynical explanation is the correct one: Noncompetes tend to result in both lower initial wages and lower wage growth over time. In other words, companies aren't using noncompetes to help them hold onto workers they've spent

a lot of money training — in which case their wages would be growing faster from all the specialized skills they'd learned — but rather to keep workers from going to a competitor for higher pay.

But this is only half the story. Employers don't just try to make it harder for workers to leave. They also try to keep them from having anywhere to go by agreeing not to hire them away from one another. This, of course, is flatly illegal when it happens between two different companies, as Apple and Google had to settle a \$415 million lawsuit against them for such an under-the-table no-poaching agreement. But it's a legal gray zone when it comes to two franchises of the same company.

Which is why it shouldn't be too surprising, as Princeton University economists Alan Krueger and Orley Ashenfelter have found, that 58 percent of major franchises, such as McDonald's, Burger King and Jiffy Lube, do in fact collude among themselves. That means that one McDonald's franchise can't hire a worker away from another McDonald's. How much does this matter? Well, Krueger and Ashenfelter can't say for sure, but they note that in Rhode Island these kind of no-poaching agreements would mean that, from the workers' perspective, the state's 261 fast-food restaurants were effectively only six.

It's just another part of what's known as labor market monopoly, where there's only one buyer. It's the reverse of a monopoly, when there's only one seller, but the effect is the same: Companies have the power to set prices — in this case, for wages — independent of what supply and demand say those prices "should" be.

That's the way it is, but there is literally only one employer, but rather that there are so few of them that it's easy for them to offer wages that are well below what

they would be in a truly competitive market. Indeed, economists Jose Azar, Ioana Marinescu and Marshall Steinbaum have found that the average labor market in the United States is "highly concentrated" like this and that the more concentrated it is, the lower wages tend to be.

That, more than anything else, might explain why even a labor market where, for the first time in almost 50 years, there is more demand for workers than there is supply — more job openings than unemployed people — hasn't made wages grow any faster. (The official numbers go back only as far as 2000, but Federal Reserve economist Regis Barnichon has put together unofficial ones that go back to the 1950s.)

So the economy might be giving workers more leverage than they've had since Richard Nixon was president, but employers are trying to wrest it away so that workers have as little leverage as they did when Herbert Hoover was in office, which is to say none.

It's a reminder that labor markets aren't just about supply and demand but also about who has the power to make the demands. A weaker welfare state, a lower minimum wage and business-friendly courts — the kind, for example, that say companies can force their employees to sign away their rights to join class-action lawsuits over "things such as wage theft" — all give businesses more bargaining power no matter what the unemployment rate is. So do "right-to-work" laws that make it harder to form unions.

It's a new Gilded Age that not even 4 percent unemployment can make a dent in.

Matt O'Brien is a reporter for The Washington Post's Worklog covering economic affairs. He was previously a senior associate editor at the Atlantic.

The radical history of the Statue of Liberty

By TYLER COWEN

Bloomberg Opinion

At a time when immigration and indeed the very nature of America's heritage are being re-examined, it is worth considering the history of one of America's greatest icons: the Statue of Liberty.

Images of the statue are so ubiquitous that it is tempting to take her for granted. But Lady Liberty, as we now call her, is quite a radical creation, both visually and conceptually. She does not carry the traditional American nationalist symbols of the flag and the eagle, instead holding the Declaration of Independence, a representation of liberty and human rights.

The statue, which took its place in New York Harbor in 1886, is also a literal monument to European-American cooperation. The work was funded by both American and French donations, designed by the Alsatian Frederic Auguste Bartholdi and conceived by his collaborator Edouard de Laboulaye. It was a private initiative, and Grover Cleveland, then governor of New York, opposed a legislative proposal to help pay for the statue. So she is a useful reminder that global cooperation is sometimes more powerful than local politics.

Another improbability is the statue's gender. It was erected at a time when no woman in the U.S. had the right to vote in federal elections. Thus was the world's largest statue a glaring reflection of American hypocrisy.

Cleveland described the statue as "keeping watch and ward before the gates of

America." This is not exactly warm rhetoric — the plaque with Emma Lazarus' poem welcoming the "huddled masses" to America was not added until 1903 — and although Cleveland supported free trade, he opposed Chinese immigrants, as he regarded them as unable to assimilate. The statue was never about fully open borders.

We Americans tend to think of the statue as reflecting the glories of our national ideals, but that's not necessarily the case. In her forthcoming "Sentinel: The Unlikely Origins of the Statue of Liberty," Francesca Lidia Viano points out that you might take the torch and aggressive stance of the statue as a warning to people to go back home, or as a declaration that the U.S. itself needs more light. Her valuable book (on which I am relying for much of the history in this column) also notes that the statue represented an expected "spiritual initiation to liberty" before crossing the border, and was seen as such at the time. The ancient Egyptians, Assyrians and Babylonians all regarded border crossing as an important ritual act, associated with "great spiritual changes." The Statue of Liberty promoted a transformational and indeed partially mystical interpretation of assimilation.

There are other interpretations of the statue's purported message based on the details of its design. You plausibly can read the statue as a Masonic icon, an homage to the family coat of arms of Bartholdi the sculptor, a harkening back to the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, a celebration of Orientalism, Orpheus and Samothracian civilization, and as a monument to the dead of the Revolutionary War. The statue

also contained design clues celebrating the New French city of Colmar (home base for Bartholdi), and threatening revenge against the Germans for taking Colmar in 1871 from the Franco-Prussian war.

The statue also had an Egyptian past, as an earlier version of the design had been planned to adorn the Suez Canal. For a while Bartholdi thought one statue could be placed in each location, helping to spiritually unify East and West.

Overall, the idea of liberty itself has some mystical foundations and also is connected to the obscure and to the esoteric. For all the scientific and engineering ingenuity behind the statue and its transport, it's not the straightforward rationalists who conceived of its splendid creation.

Moreover, each generation tends to reinvent the statue for its own purposes. In 2011, the Postal Service issued a stamp based on the statue, but in fact it used the facsimile of the statue found in Las Vegas. The sculptor of the Las Vegas version sued and won a judgment of some \$3.5 million from the Postal Service. He claimed his version was "less real" than the one modeled the face of his Lady Liberty not on the great monuments of antiquity, but rather on his mother-in-law.

If you are upset, as I am, that today's America is not properly honoring the traditions of the Statue of Liberty, then it may be worthwhile to look to the culture to understand why.

Tyler Cowen is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He is professor of economics at George Mason University and the author of "The Complacent Class: The Self-Defeating Quest for the American Dream."

OPINION

What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other statewide syndicates.

Value in new look at Till's death

Chicago Tribune

The brutal murder of Emmett Till, a black Chicago youth, in Mississippi nearly 63 years ago went unpunished, but not forgotten. A decision by his mother, Mamie Till-Mobley, to allow an open casket at Emmett's Chicago funeral represented an act of defiance as well as mourning, helping to ignite the modern civil rights movement. "Let the people see what I've seen," she told the funeral director.

"I think everybody needed to know what had happened to Emmett Till," she said in a PBS documentary interview. Those words ring loudly amid news that the U.S. Department of Justice has reopened an investigation of the 1955 slaying.

Many of the horrific details of Till's death, including the racist intent and identities of the killers, are known. The name Emmett Till remains a powerful byword of the black struggle for equality. What's missing is closure. And justice.

Emmett Till was 14 years old in the summer of 1955, living with his mother in a two-flat at 6427 S. St. Lawrence Ave., when he was put on a train to visit relatives near Money, Miss. He was killed by a 21-year-old white woman, Carolyn Bryant, who had Emmett propositioned and whistled at her at a corner store. Days later, Emmett was abducted. His body was found in the Tallahatchie River, weighted down by a cast iron cotton gin pulley. He'd been beaten savagely and shot in the head.

The case was a sensation. Photos in Jet magazine of Emmett's mutilated body shocked America. Two white Mississippi men, Roy Bryant, then Carolyn's husband, and his half brother J.W. Milam, were acquitted of the murder — by an all-white, small-town jury that deliberated for a little over an hour, including a Coke break. Rosa Parks said she had Emmett Till in mind in December 1955 when she refused to move to the back of a bus in Montgomery, Ala.

A month later, Bryant and Milam admitted their guilt to Look magazine.

The pair are dead, as is Emmett Till's mother, but the wound at the corner store — who divorced Roy Bryant in 1975, remarried and is now named Carolyn Donham — is alive. About a decade ago, the Justice Department and Mississippi prosecutors reinvestigated the murder; they declined to move forward. A year later, a federal judge ruled in favor of the state. B. Tyson and said she hadn't been truthful in her trial testimony. "Nothing that boy did ever justify what happened to him," she's quoted as saying in Tyson's recently published book, "The Blood of Emmett Till."

Both a new interview could be the reason for a renewed federal investigation, according to The Associated Press. The Justice Department told Congress in a report in March that it is again looking into the killing because of "new information."

Emmett Till's legacy endures. And now there is a new investigation. We hope that means the nation one day soon will know all the facts of what happened to him.

Drug prices effort disappoints

The New York Times

It has been two months since President Donald Trump released his road map for lowering drug costs that seems to lead nowhere, and about a month since he predicted the "big drug companies" would announce "voluntary massive" price cuts. Here's where things stand:



ROSELYN V. SOULS/AP

A Mississippi Freedom Trail marker recaps the significance of Bryant's Grocery and Meat Market, now in ruins, in Money, Miss. In 1955, black teenager Emmett Till was accused of whistling at and making sexual advances to the white wife of the store's owner. Till was subsequently abducted and killed.

A congressional investigation has found that the drug company Novartis got more out of its \$1.2 million payment to Trump's "personal attorney" Michael Cohen than had been known. Meanwhile, several other drugmakers defied Trump's lofty prediction by raising their prices substantially, while his administration shut down a proposal that would have helped individual states lower their drug costs.

Taken together, the developments help explain why, a year and a half after Trump took office, prescription drugs cost more than ever.

Let's start with Novartis. When a lawyer for Stephanie Clifford, the pornographic-film star suing Trump, revealed that the drug company had agreed to pay those who had made payments to Cohen after the election, Novartis executives insisted they'd had only one meeting before concluding Cohen didn't know enough about health care policy to be helpful. But Senate Democrats have since found that the company actually had several meetings, that drug-price policies were on the agenda and that a number of proposals Novartis pushed for made it into the White House plan.

For his part, Trump made a show of chastising the industry on Twitter when several drugmakers raised their prices this month. He called out Pfizer specifically, saying the company "should be ashamed" of itself. The tweet led to a phone call between the company's chief executive and the president, after which Pfizer agreed to hold off on those price increases for six months, or until the administration had a chance to put its road map into action.

Trump said the concession was "great news for the American people," but it might actually be more of a coup for the pharmaceutical industry. By tying its actions to the president's initiative, Pfizer now has both a stick and a carrot to wield. Implement a policy that benefits the industry and maybe the company will abandon its price increases; create one that hurts the industry and the company may raise prices once again. In any case, none of the other drugmakers that raised their prices followed Pfizer's lead, meaning that those increases are still in place.

The administration now seems intent on adding insult to injury by blocking states from carrying out a policy that might actually make a dent in the drug-cost problem.

That proposal would have opened the door on allowing state Medicaid programs to deny coverage for certain medications. Private insurance companies, the Department of Veterans Affairs and many other countries with drug prices far lower than ours already do this, but Medicaid is required to cover all federally approved medications, no matter how much they cost or how well (or poorly) they work. If states were allowed to circumvent this rule, they

would be able to avoid paying for pricey new drugs that aren't necessarily as effective as cheaper versions already on the market. They would also have much more negotiating power because they would be able to walk away from the table for drugs that were overpriced.

It's unclear where we go from here. The administration's road map for lowering drug costs was short on details about when or how any of its provisions might take effect. And while there's no telling what Trump discussed with Pfizer that caused it to temporarily halt planned price increases, the exchanges between Cohen and Novartis hardly inspire good faith. In fact, if the industry is "getting away with murder," as one pundit claimed, it stands to reason that at this point, it's doing it with the president's help.

Spoofs reveal troubling truths

The Post and Courier of Charleston (S.C.)

Sacha Baron Cohen has fooled a lot of public officials during roughly two decades of TV and movie work playing a variety of characters who coax outrageous and embarrassing statements out of people like Newt Gingrich, Ralph Nader, Ron Paul and then-host of "The Apprentice" Donald Trump.

The comic actor even made a couple of trips to Charleston for one of his earlier TV shows, duping more than a few of our fellow Low City residents on camera in the process.

In other words, he would be silly to fault Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C., who appeared in the premiere episode of Cohen's new show "Who Is America?" on Sunday, for falling for a noted prankster's tricks. But it is decidedly less silly to be somewhat concerned by what Wilson appeared to heartily endorse on the show.

The centerpiece of Sunday's episode was a bit in which Cohen played an Israeli anti-terrorism expert named Erran Morad. Several public officials and gun rights advocates endorsed Morad's outlandish "Kindergardens" program as a solution to school shootings.

Why arm teachers, the pitch went, when students as young as 3 could be trained to defend themselves against armed intruders? (But no younger than 3, of course, because "they call them the terrible twos for a reason," joked Cohen in the episode.)

Obviously, such a plan would be ridiculous — not to mention dangerous. That's the whole point of the joke. But Wilson, who said Tuesday he was just reading a script producers gave him, went along with it.

"A 3-year-old cannot defend itself from an assault rifle by throwing a Hello Kitty pencil case at it," said Wilson. "Our founding fathers did not put an age limit on the

Second Amendment."

Yikes.

Rep. Dana Rohrabacher, R-Calif.; former Mississippi Sen. Trent Lott; and former Illinois Rep. Joe Walsh also gave the Kindergardens a ringing endorsement.

Again, it's not so much that Wilson and his fellow current and former lawmakers fear for Cohen's ruse, so far among us hasn't fallen for a prank for the sake of a point or another? But Wilson's apparent willingness to go along with a clearly ludicrous proposal is less troubling than the extent to which such an absurd policy idea seems mundane in this era of heightened polarization and diminished appreciation for what has otherwise long been considered obvious common sense.

Cohen's show so far has earned mixed reviews for precisely that reason. The headlines on any given day are so unbelievable, and the daily Twitter misses from President Donald Trump so inflammatory, that even the most jaw-dropping content from a public figure seems commonplace.

To be sure, people have put their feet in their mouths so to speak for as long as there have been people, feet and mouths. And Cohen has proven himself uniquely adept at eliciting some cringe-worthy reactions from otherwise very serious people.

Still, we apparently live in a time in which "guns for toddlers" is an acceptable policy proposal for sitting lawmakers to endorse. It's hard to know whether to laugh or to cry.

Privatize air traffic control

The Orange County (Calif.) Register

The Trump administration revived calls for privatizing air traffic control services last month as part of a broader proposal to reorganize and modernize the federal government.

The report, "Delivering Government Solutions in the 21st Century," renews the White House's commitment to seeing American government services privatized, a world by moving away from the taxpayer-funded, Federal Aviation Administration-run air traffic control system toward a nonprofit system funded by user fees.

As the report notes, approximately 60 countries have shifted responsibility for air traffic control from government to nongovernmental providers. Starting with New Zealand in 1987, countries like Australia, Canada, Germany, Switzerland and the United Kingdom have turned over air traffic control to self-sustaining nongovernmental providers.

By doing this, other countries have freed air traffic control operations from the constraints of a government entity subject to the whims of Congress to better reflect the actual needs of consumers. As Bob Poole from the Reason Foundation told us last week, "The cost of the current system is offset in that in the U.S. is trapped in a tax-funded regulatory bureaucracy."

Among the many consequences of these constraints, the American air traffic control system has long lagged behind other countries in incorporating modern technology into its operations.

American air traffic controllers use WWII-era radar technology as the backbone of our system to manage the most congested airspace in the world," noted Rep. Bill Shuster in an op-ed for The Hill.

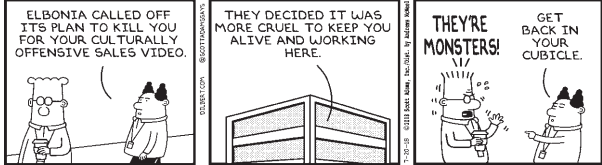
That could and should end if responsibility for air traffic control is shifted out of the FAA and converted to a nonprofit corporation model similar to the system used in Canada, as supported by the Trump administration.

Nav Canada, created in 1996, is responsible for the second-largest navigation service in the world. It has been called a "global leader in delivering top class performance" by the International Air Transport Association. Nav Canada is funded by customers, not by government. As a result, Nav Canada has kept ahead of the curve on adopting the latest technologies, yielding better service and greater efficiencies. It's a model the U.S. should follow.

Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



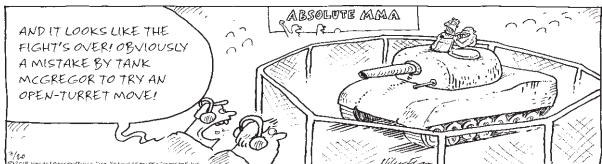
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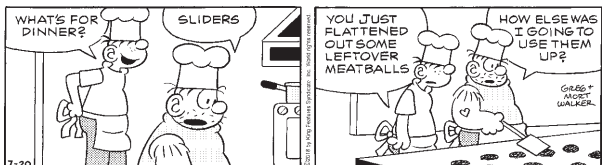
Candorville



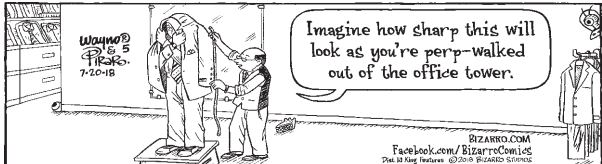
Carpe Diem



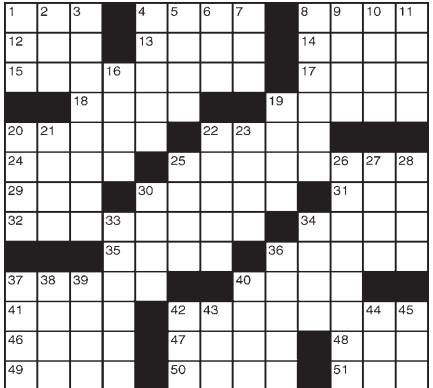
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- Medico
- Roster
- High-five sound
- Suffix with cash
- Singer Paul
- Vagrant
- Media packet
- Regrets
- Dazzles
- Humorous
- Ravi's instrument
- Beef cut
- "Hold on ..."
- Take care of a vacationer's home
- Previously
- Boozehound
- Season opener?
- Cash-draining venture
- Blueprint
- Leg joint
- BLT bread
- Rocky debris
- Get lippy
- Buckeye State
- Substitute (for)
- Bean curd
- Exotic berry
- Prior night
- Cushy

DOWN

- Chips go-with
- Not 'neath
- Genesis subject
- Surgical beam
- Pen fluids
- Enjoy Vail
- Make lace
- Place of prayer
- LummoX
- Help a crook
- Bouquet
- Smack a baseball
- Sagacious
- Did laps
- Shakespearean villain
- Comic Anderson
- Evict
- Aspiration
- Played in a kiddie pool
- Nest egg choices
- Circus structure
- "Auld Lang —"
- Barely manage
- Ritz
- Unspoken
- Lushes
- Sneeze syllable
- Jazz phrase
- Lose it
- Furry foot
- Water cooler?
- "— been had!"
- Toe count

Answer to Previous Puzzle



7-20

CRYPTOQUIP

I O K T G K ' M I C K T O P M D G G N A
O H C S R R A G D K C V K G M M C I
A Q M D S L V G L R H S P H M :
M R O R G - C I - R A G - C L Q C L
O U U K G M M .

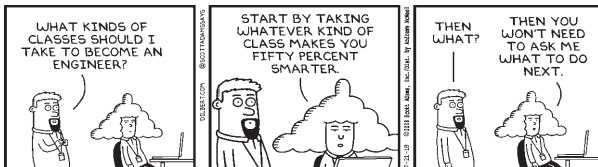
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: THAT GUY IS ONE LEVEL UNDER THE CONVENT SISTER IN THE RELIGIOUS HIERARCHY. HE'S SECOND TO NUN.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals F

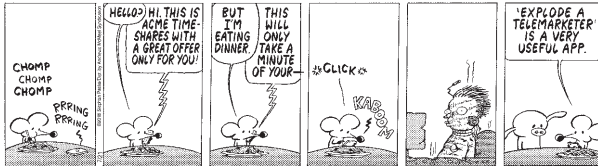
Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



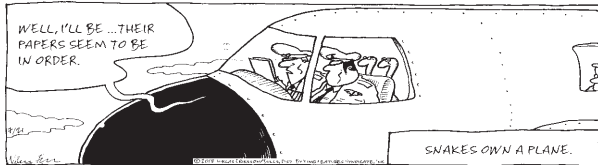
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	
12					13					14			
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39	40	41			42	43				44	45	46	47
48					49					50			
51					52					53			
54					55					56			

ACROSS

- Belgrade resident
- Church area
- Use a taser
- Waikiki's island
- Guy's dates
- Unwell
- Worry
- Power co. supply
- Eastern "way"
- Body sci.
- Buckeyes' sch.
- Cantaloupe cover
- Hooting bird
- Spanish aunt
- Was obsequious
- Mingle
- Hilo hello
- Steak choice
- On the job
- Coupled (with)
- Caustic cleaner
- DDE predecessor
- French cheese
- Unpaid TV ad
- Easter entrees
- Corn spike
- JFK guesses
- Spoken
- Deluge refuge
- Ancient letter
- Corporate symbol

- Moines
- Mimics
- Redact

DOWN

- Couch
- Deserve
- Actress
- Suit jacket aperture
- Ancient
- Buddies
- Gumshoe
- Computer key
- Spaghetti pasta
- Country singer
- Jackson
- Trudge
- Passage to Wonderland
- Tired
- Smidgens
- Air safety org.
- Flight stat
- Dazzle
- Neither mate
- Small bill
- Nap site
- Didn't lag
- Stages
- Rosary component
- Exceptional
- Annoys
- Logical
- Former
- Yankee slugger, to fans
- Creche trio
- Piggy bank opening
- Epoch

Answer to Previous Puzzle

DOC	LIST	SLAP
IER	ANKA	HOB
PRESS	KIT	RUES
	AWES	WITTY
SITAR	LOIN	
WAIT	HOUSE	SIT
AGO	SOUSE	PRE
MONEY	PIT	PLAN
	KNEE	TOAST
SCREE	SASS	
OHIO	PINCH	HIT
TOFU	ACAI	EVE
SOFT	WEPT	DEN

7-21

CRYPTOQUIP

V BEZF DZG'W XVBU IU OZ
IRBU R HKURONVEY PZGEW
ZA FVPOAGXEUPP, HGO VO'P
EZO AZK IU OZ PNYN.
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Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals W

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in the European Theater of Operations

Vol. 1—No. 241

1 Fr.

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Sunday, March 25, 1945

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TENNIS/NFL



NEIL HALL, POOL/AP

Serbia's Novak Djokovic has won 13 Grand Slam titles, including the Wimbledon title last weekend.

Djokovic rejoins Federer, Nadal as 'Big 3' member

By HOWARD FENDRICH
Associated Press

LONDON — What had gone from a Big 4 to a Big 2 is now back to a Big 3, with Novak Djokovic rejoining Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal at the top of men's tennis.

Each has been written off at some point. And each has won a major tournament in 2018: Djokovic's title at Wimbledon on Sunday, Nadal's at the French Open in June, and Roger Federer's at the Australian Open in January.

"It's amazing," Djokovic's coach Marian Vajda said, "that those three got back like this."

Maybe the U.S. Open, which starts in 1½ months, will break the tie for season supremacy. That trio has combined to win 10 of the past 14 championships at Flushing Meadows: Five for Federer, three for Nadal, two for Djokovic. At least one, and sometimes two, appeared in 13 of the finals in that span.

Federer, who turns 37 on Aug. 8, won that event every year from 2004-08 but not since. Nadal, 32, is the reigning champion.

Djokovic, 31, sat out the U.S. Open while missing the last half of 2017 because of an injured right elbow that he eventually had surgery on.

He announced his return to prominence and ended a Grand Slam title drought that lasted more than two years by overwhelming Kevin Anderson 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (3) in the final at the All England Club. While Djokovic was having his problems, Federer and Nadal combined to win six majors in a row, a streak that ended at Wimbledon.

Anderson, last year's runner-up at the U.S. Open, was impressed by the quality he's seen from Djokovic — both on Sunday and when they practiced with each other of late.

"Guys at the top can expect to see him on the other side of the net quite frequently," Anderson predicted.

And why not?

The 31-year-old Djokovic is, remember, someone in possession of 13 Grand Slam titles, the fourth-most in history for a man. He trails only contemporary rivals Federer (20) and Nadal (17), along with childhood idol Pete Sampras (14).

Djokovic is also the only man since Rod Laver's second calendar-year Grand Slam of 1969 to win four consecutive majors, a run he completed at the



ANDREW COULDRIDGE, POOL/AP

Spain's Rafael Nadal, above, combined with Roger Federer to win six Grand Slams in a row while Novak Djokovic was sidelined with an elbow injury.

2016 French Open. He hadn't won a Slam since, until Sunday.

Andy Murray, a three-time major champion and two-time Olympic singles gold medalist, is the fourth member of the Big 4, but he's been sidelined for most of the last year because of a bad hip that needed an operation. When Djokovic was out, too, the quartet was cut in half.

For the time being, it's a trio.

"I understand that people are questioning whether I can consistently play on this level. Trust me, I am, too. At the same time, I can't look too far on the road because I have to embrace and cherish this kind of accomplishment," Djokovic said.

NFL ref says calls were right all along

By SCHUYLER DIXON
Associated Press

PLANO, Texas — Walt Coleman doesn't see the revamped catch rule as a big change for NFL game officials because the veteran referee believes they've already been calling catches the new way.

If anything, Coleman figures there will be fewer reviews of their rulings.

"Most of the calls that seemed to create the most controversy, we ruled them correctly and then they were overturned on replay," Coleman said Friday as officials gathered for their annual pre-season meeting in the Dallas area. "From our standpoint, we're just going to continue to officiate the plays like we have."

League owners unanimously approved the changes in April — more than three years after Dez Bryant's infamous catch that wasn't in Dallas' playoff loss at Green Bay, and just a few months since Pittsburgh's Jesse James had a late go-ahead touchdown taken away in a loss to New England that damaged the Steelers' hopes for the AFC's top seed.

Essentially, the new rule eliminates the ground as a factor on catches while establishing three main criteria:

- Having control of the ball;
- Getting two feet down or another body part;
- Making a football move, such as taking a third step or extending the ball.

On the plays involving Bryant and James, the ball moved slightly after hitting the ground as they extended it forward, even though they never lost control of it. Both were ruled catches and overturned on replay.

"I don't think it was one thing," senior vice president of officiating Al Riveron said. "I think we got to a point where fans, the office, coaches, players, wanted to see more exciting plays. How do we make this particular play a catch?"

How do we take the Dez Bryant play and make it a catch?"

Riveron said the competition committee consulted with coaches, former players, game officials and supervisors to reach the rule change that was approved.

The committee cited overturned receptions by James and fellow tight end Zach Miller of Chicago last season among the dozens of plays they reviewed "dozens of times," according to committee chairman Rick McKay, president of the Atlanta Falcons.

Ron Torbert, going into his fifth season as a referee and ninth overall as a game official, doesn't think the new rule is just about simplicity.

"We had a good idea of what it was and how to officiate it," Torbert said. "We certainly understand that the way it was written, plays that people wanted to be a catch weren't a catch under the older rule. We understand that."

Coleman, getting ready for his 30th NFL season, was in his third year as a referee when he called the reversal in the "tuck rule" game during the playoffs following the 2001 season. He changed what had been ruled a fumble by New England quarterback Tom Brady to an incomplete, leading to a winning field goal that sent the Patriots on their way to the first five Super Bowl titles.

While he didn't make the call on the Bryant catch that was overturned (recently retired Gene Steratore did), Coleman saw similarities in the reactions to the two calls lingered for years. And he certainly heard from fans on the catch rule in general.

"People just didn't understand that you had to hold on to the ball going to the ground," Coleman said. "When you catch the ball and you reach out, everybody thought that should be a catch. The way the rule was written, it wasn't."

And now the way the rule is written, it is.



DON WRIGHT/AP

Steelers tight end Jesse James, left, loses his grip on the ball after crossing the goal line on Dec. 17 against the New England Patriots in Pittsburgh. The NFL has a simplified catch rule designed to eliminate confusion — and, the league hopes, controversy. Under the new rule, the play would've been ruled a catch.

NBA

Referee University

Players aren't the only ones looking to make an impression at summer league

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — It's a half-hour after their game ended and the night is just beginning for referees Ashley Gilpin, Natalie Sago and SirAllen Conner. They've showered, they've changed clothes, but dinner and the bright lights of Las Vegas will have to wait.

A long classroom session is up first. They walk into a tiny locker room, grab seats on folding chairs and open their notebooks. Everything they did on the court that night — where they stood, where they looked, what call they made, what call they didn't make — will be scrutinized on video for the next two hours by NBA referees, tasked with teaching the summer refs what they need to know to make it to the league.

Think of it as Referee University.

Summer league is where players can get noticed by the NBA, and the same is true for referees.

"We want them to watch us because we want to grow each and every game," Sago told The Associated Press, which observed the feedback session with Sago, Gilpin and Conner. "We're all trying to be NBA referees. So it's a job interview for us just like it is for the players and the coaches."

There were 81 referees — mostly from the G League — working games at the NBA summer league in Las Vegas, which ended Tuesday. All 81 have been exposed to multiple classroom sessions with current and retired NBA officials, who are there to essentially groom the people who could one day replace them. Programs like this have been in play for years, although it's no secret that the NBA wants to increase its pool of referees by 25 percent before 2020.

"That's why this summer might provide more big breaks than usual for those blowing the whistles at games. The overwhelming majority of refs working this summer won't see the NBA anytime soon, and many never will, but for some the call is closer than ever before."

"What we want to do in our training is give people the opportunity to have the tools to be successful," said Monty McCutchen, the NBA's vice president overseeing referee development and training. "It's about teaching. I think one of the great disappointments of American culture, as I see it, is we don't appreciate apprenticeship enough. We think that just by going to school you're suddenly ready instead of having hands-on training that allows you to grow."

"Here, we give that hands-on training."

Of the 81 summer refs, 19 were women — up from just five at summer league last year and nearly doubling the total of 10 who worked the event over the most recent five years. It is clear that it won't be long before more women make it to the NBA level.

For now, there's only one in the NBA: Lauren Holtkamp.

"To me, it's a bit embarrassing that we only have one working woman in our officiating ranks right now," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said. "There is no physical reason why that's the case."

Up-and-comers like Gilpin and Sago could change that.

Gilpin might have an ideal academic makeup for refereeing, with three degrees from Arizona, where she also played basketball — an undergraduate in psychology, master's in administration and then a law degree. Sago played college softball, but has long had an affinity for basketball. Conner has worked 11 games in the NBA, most of those coming as a replacement ref during the lockout in 2009.

At the game Gilpin, Sago and Conner worked together, at least a half-dozen referees were seated on the baseline and in the stands watching. McCutchen, at one point, saw a technique that Gilpin used and jumped from his chair in delight before going over and asking other refs if they had noticed the same thing.

"If you can't referee in front of them, you can't work for them," Gilpin said. "Sure, sometimes we get nervous because it is an audition. But if we think about every call, every 'oh my gosh this is a bad call,' paralysis by analysis, we'll run ourselves out of this profession."

During their classroom session with longtime NBA ref Eric Lewis, the three spoke in sync, even finishing each other's thoughts on a couple of occasions. Retired ref Bernie Fryer and Mark Wunderlich were in and out of the room as well, offering their thoughts on whatever play happened to be on the screen at a given time.

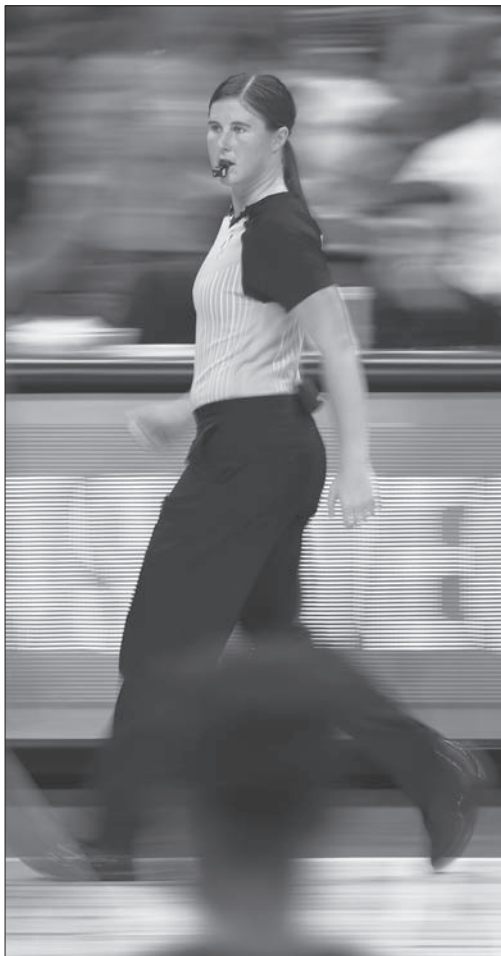
For the referees, it's serious business.

"It's my job to get them hired," Lewis said. "I'm focused on the things I can do to help them improve and get a job."

They all monitor in different ways — at some games, James Williams took meticulous notes, pulling out a tablet and typing observations during stoppages in play. At other games, Joey Crawford would handwrite his notes, with penmanship that not even fellow ref John

'We're all trying to be NBA referees. So it's a job interview for us just like it is for the players and the coaches.'

Natalie Sago
NBA G League referee



JOHN LOCHER/AP

Referee Natalie Sago works at an NBA summer league game between the Los Angeles Clippers and the Atlanta Hawks last Friday in Las Vegas.

Goble could understand.

By any method, legible or not, their input is vital.

"When you tell someone something, and they go out and do it, that gets you excited as someone who is seeking to bring in the next wave, next generation of officials," McCutchen said.

Lewis' group needed to spend only a few seconds on some plays, spent several minutes on others. Late in the first half of their game, Gilpin gave Golden State coach Willie Green a technical foul — the first one she handed out in a pro game. Green argued that he wasn't waving dismissively at her, but rather he was waving to someone behind her.

A few moments later, Gilpin missed a call.

"I was in my head," Gilpin acknowledged afterward.

Lewis shrugged and told her to believe

in her call, believe the tech was warranted, and move on to the next play. And besides, the call that she missed, one of her fellow refs made anyway.

"If we can get them where you need to be, where you need to look and give you an understanding of the guidelines of what's illegal and legal, then it becomes easy," Lewis said. "They digest the play, they know the process and that leads to the right decision at the end of the play."

Fans probably wouldn't believe that those decisions get honed inside a cramped concrete-block room, one with mustard-colored walls and dingy carpet, and a pile of towels strewn off to the side.

But the tiny room is what gets the refs ready for the big stage.

"The best part after a game is coming in here and re-watching it," Sago said. "It's all about getting ready."

NBA

New look for San Antonio

Popovich, Spurs move on after All-Star swap

By Raul Dominguez
Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO — The most tumultuous offseason in Gregg Popovich's two decades with the Spurs ended with the trade of star Kawhi Leonard to Toronto.

And Popovich says he is fine with that.

The Spurs traded Leonard and Danny Green to the Toronto Raptors for DeMar DeRozan, Jakob Poeltl and a conditional 2019 first-round pick on Wednesday. It was clear that Leonard was ready to go despite years of success with Popovich and the Spurs.

"At this point, my main interest is definitely not to look back," Popovich said. "It doesn't do us any good whatsoever. I'm thrilled to have DeMar and Jakob join us. From that point on, that's where my focus will be."

Popovich was jovial and heart-felt in speaking to the media for the first time since his wife, Erin, died April 18. Popovich did not coach the Spurs in the final three games of their first-round playoff loss to Golden State.

Popovich said this offseason has been "difficult" for him, but it has not dampened the 69-year-old's desire to continue coaching.

"When I can't do it anymore or don't want to do it or people don't want to do it with me, then I'll stop doing it, but I'm fine," he said.

Popovich will be coaching a crop of young talent unseen in San Antonio since the early days of the Big Three of Tim Duncan, Tony Parker and Manu Ginobili — a roster the result of some big changes.

In addition to losing Leonard and Green, San Antonio also lost Parker and Kyle Anderson to free agency. It was especially tough losing Parker, who Popovich formed a patriarchal bond with since the Spurs drafted the then 19-year-old from France.

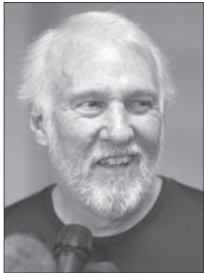
Parker signed a two-year deal with Charlotte after Popovich and Spurs general manager R.C. Buford informed the 36-year-old point guard that his minutes would be limited in favor of younger players like Dejounte Murray, Derrick White, Bryn Forbes and first-round pick Lonnie Walker out of Miami.

"This was really good for Tony," Popovich said. "He'll get more playing time, it'll kind of rejuvenate him a little bit. I think he's really excited to be in Charlotte and we've got some young kids that we need to develop in Dejounte and Derrick White and Bryn and so forth."

Led by LaMarcus Aldridge's resurgent season, the Spurs won 47 games last season and reached the playoffs for a 21st consecutive year. They did so despite playing without Leonard for all but nine games due to a right quadriceps



PHOTOS BY FRANK GUNN, ABOVE, AND WILLIAM LUTHER, LEFT/AT



DeMar DeRozan, above, was traded from the Toronto Raptors to the San Antonio Spurs as part of a package for forward Kawhi Leonard on Wednesday. The transaction brings an end to a tumultuous year for the Spurs, head coach Gregg Popovich, left, and Leonard, who sat out all but nine games last season and made it clear after the season that he had no intention of returning to play for San Antonio. The Spurs also acquired center Jakob Poeltl and a 2019 protected first-round draft pick, while the Raptors got sharpshooter Danny Green.

injury the All-Star forward suffered last year.

Popovich said he believes this year's team will be more talented despite the offseason losses.

"I think we've sustained a pretty good level of excellence for a very long time, more than most," Popovich said. "Hopefully that will continue and I'm confident it will with someone like DeMar and a young player like Jakob that can develop."

The Spurs were able to re-sign Rudy Gay and added former Spurs guard Marco Belinelli. Trading for DeRozan and Poeltl kept with the team's mantra of short- and long-term planning. DeRozan is signed for three more seasons and Poeltl was selected ninth by Toronto in the 2016 draft.

"I thought our staff did an unbelievably great job bringing back quality players, quality people and in DeMar, a proven All-Star. I have to be thrilled with that, and I am," Popovich said.

The Spurs are hoping the addition of DeRozan and Walker along with the continued development of Murray, White, Forbes and Davis Bertans along with a healthier Gay will help them in the loaded Western Conference.

"You've got to shoot the basketball and DeMar does that well," Popovich said. "But the rest of the makeup of the team having Derek White develop, having Bryn come back, having Rudy come back all people who can shoot it. Adding Marco Bel-

Raptors: Leonard reportedly unhappy with trade to Toronto

FROM BACK PAGE

that it will be a two-year mission. Getting LeBron James to sign with LA earlier this month was a big part of the plan, but it wasn't the whole plan. Phase 2 is surrounding James with superstar talent, and it's hard to see any reason why Leonard doesn't end up in purple and gold at some point in 2019 — whether through a trade or free agency.

Leonard probably isn't happy, but he almost certainly can't run the risk of sitting out another year.

DeRozan clearly isn't happy. That's no disrespect to San Antonio — the Spurs are a model franchise and Gregg Popovich is a coach almost anyone would want to play for — but DeRozan rather would have stayed in Toronto.

DeRozan got plenty of support from his NBA peers, including Dwyane Wade, who told The Associated Press that he hopes this trade reminds fans that teams will do what they want when they feel it's time to move a player — so players shouldn't be derided when they exercise their options to move on through free agency, either.

"DeRozan gave everything to Toronto, everything they asked him to do from the standpoint of loyalty," Wade said. "That's why I hate loyalty and sports, those two words, they shouldn't go together. You just feel for guys and their family. He committed to them. It's a business and you understand the business, but from a player standpoint, it just sucks."

The Spurs were never going to trade Leonard to the Lakers. It made no sense. Why would San

Antonio help a fellow Western Conference team get better, especially when the best team in basketball — Golden State — seems to have a chokehold on the Larry O'Brien Trophy with no plans of letting go anytime soon?

Plus, the Lakers didn't have the sort of assets the Spurs would have wanted for an elite player like Leonard. He played in nine games for the Spurs last season and was barely a factor. DeRozan will almost certainly give San Antonio more next year than Leonard gave the Spurs last year. Hence, they just got a lot better.

Boston had the required assets but apparently wasn't willing to part with them. Philadelphia did, too. But Toronto, to its credit, saw no reason why it shouldn't be bold this summer. Dwane Casey was the coach of the year who won 59 games and led the Raptors to the No. 1 seed in the East last season. He got fired because the Raptors never figured out how to beat James in the playoffs.

The Raptors are really good. Second-best record in the regular season a year ago, behind only Houston. But they know they're not good enough to win a title, and while they stopped short of blowing up the team they sure gave the foundation a couple of good thwacks with a wrecking ball in dumping Casey and trading DeRozan.

Can Leonard get them over the hump? Maybe. If he's healthy, he could be the best player in the Eastern Conference, largely because of the way he can take a game over on the defensive end.

That's a player worth the risk. So now we see if Ujiri can work some magic.

Did you know

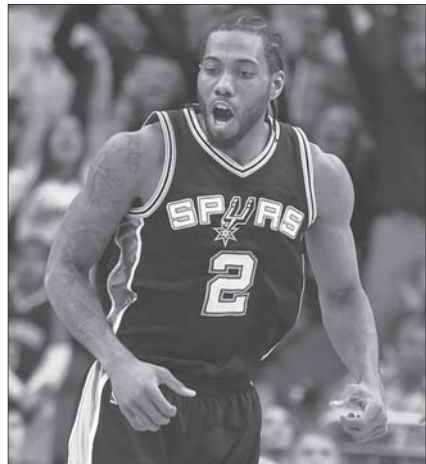
San Antonio won 47 games last season and reached the playoffs for a 21st consecutive season despite playing without All-Star forward Kawhi Leonard for all but nine games.

SOURCE: Associated Press

nelli is important so those things round out and helps LaMarcus do his thing down there. That shooting will help us a great deal."

One unknown factor is Ginobili. The veteran guard from Argentina has a year remaining on his contract but has not decided if he will return. Popovich said Ginobili "is chasing bears in the Northwest" while vacationing with his three young sons. Hoping to entice the 40-year-old to return, Popovich sent a picture of Ginobili in his early years, dunking on an opponent.

"He sent me back a picture of me like in my first year here as an assistant," Popovich said. "I'm not sure what that meant. Like, 'You're crazy, you're old, too.'"



STEPHEN M. DOWELL, ORLANDO SENTINEL/TNS

Kawhi Leonard was acquired by the Raptors from the San Antonio Spurs on Wednesday in a bold move by Toronto to get over the hump in what should be a wide-open Eastern Conference.

BRITISH OPEN



PHOTOS BY PETER MORRISON/AP

U.S. golfer Jordan Spieth lines up a putt on the 17th green during a practice round Monday for the British Open at Carnoustie golf club in Scotland.

Commentary

American core of stars have grown up together

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

JCARNOUSTIE, Scotland — Justin Thomas lost a skin by making bogey. He won a bet by making par.

All on the same hole. The difference — a big difference — was in the clubs Thomas used to cover the 472 yards on the 15th hole at Carnoustie. And that one hole during a British Open practice round Tuesday, with a little drama and a lot of laughs, captured the essence of this growing class of young American stars.

They've known each other since they were teenagers.

The fun hasn't left them, even as the trophies, fame and money keep piling up.

Patrick Cantlay, who shot 60 on the PGA Tour the summer after his freshman year at UCLA, won six skins from Thomas and Jordan Spieth with a routine par. Thomas was far more interested in a side bet with Michael Greller, who caddied for Thomas and then Spieth when they were amateurs, and left his job as a sixth-grade math teacher to work for Spieth when he turned pro.

The challenge was for Thomas to make par using only an 8-iron.

Once he got it in the fairway, Spieth came over to advise him how to navigate the pot bunkers more than 200 yards away. The ball stopped rolling, finally, about a yard short of a bunker to the left of the green. Getting it over the bunker with that club was going to be a problem.



U.S. golfer Brooks Koepka laughs on the 16th green during a practice round on Monday.

"Where's my caddy?" Thomas said in mock panic.

Spieth was preparing to hit a bunker shot on the other side of the fairway when he looked over and said, "Sorry," then ran to Thomas for more consultation. He told Thomas to open the face of the 8-iron and slide it under the firm turf. Spieth pointed to a spot on the slope beyond the bunker. Greller watched nervously as Thomas pulled it off to perfection, the ball rolling out to 3 feet.

With the leading edge of the 8-iron, he knocked it in for a 4. And then, as usual, they all debated the size of the bet.

This stuff goes on all the time, involving any number of players.

Spieth spoke of the players who came out of the high school Class of 2011 who have gone on to star on the big stage. It includes Spieth and his three legs of the ca-

reer Grand Slam, Thomas and his recent albeit brief rise to No. 1 in the world after winning the PGA Championship, Daniel Berger and his passion at the Presidents Cup and Xander Schauffele, the most recent PGA Tour rookie of the year.

There are others a few years older, such as two-time U.S. Open champion Brooks Koepka, Masters champion Patrick Reed and Cantlay.

They faced one another across America as juniors and into college, and it hasn't really stopped.

"It's kind of a natural transition into kind of fearless golf at the highest level," Spieth said. "I think that's what you're seeing out of 20-something-year-olds. The game is getting athletic, but as far as the mental side of it, guys have just been playing against better fields on better golf courses because of the junior and amateur circuit."

Six years ago, the U.S. had only three players in their 20s at the Ryder Cup. Two of them, Webb Simpson and Keegan Bradley, were recent major winners. Now, six of the top eight players in the current Ryder Cup standings are still in their 20s, and four are major winners.

"There's no doubt about it and there's no other way to put it when they have an exceptional bunch of players at the moment," said Tommy Fleetwood of England. "It just so happens that it has been a run of American golfers that have won majors. But at the same time, they've generally been the best players in the world."

Spieth stumbles on closing holes

By DOUG FERGUSON
Associated Press

CARNOUSTIE, Scotland — Through 14 holes, Jordan Spieth was challenging for the lead in the British Open and making it look easy.

"Just a clean round of golf," he said.

And then it got messy in a hurry.

Spieth came undone on the tough closing stretch at Carnoustie, dropping four shots over the final four holes. One shot went into the bunker. Another went into the Barry Burn. Another was closer to the gallery than the green.

He had to sign for a 1-over 72, the fifth time in his last seven majors that he was over par after the opening round.

Kevin Kisner took advantage of light winds and warm temperatures to shoot a 5-under 66 and take the early lead. He needed only 22 putts as he made his way around the Carnoustie links, where wispy rough and fast fairways made for low scores among the early groups. He had a one-shot lead over Erik Van Rooyen, Tony Finau and Zander Lombard.

Kisner, who is staying with Spieth and several other players at a house near the course, said they have been enjoying nightly soccer matches in the yard. But he was up early for his morning tee time, and took advantage of the benign conditions.

What bothered Spieth was not so much a shot, but a decision.

His slide began on the 492-yard 15th hole, when he chose 4-iron off the tee and the ball bounced to the left on the crusty links into wispy fescue. That wasn't a problem. Spieth was 202 yards from the front of the green and decided to hit 6-iron that would land short of the green and roll onto the putting surface.

The risk was hitting into a pot bunker, and he found the worst one.

"Even if goes 20 yards over the green, it's an easy up-and-down," Spieth said. "And that's what I would consider a significant advantage for me is recognizing

where the misses are. And I just had had a brain fart. I missed it into the ... only pot bunker where I could actually get in trouble. And it plugged deep into it."

The crowd knew he was in trouble when he turned to a 90-degree angle and asked a small group of the photographers and officials to move back, even though they were standing in the rough. He blasted out sideways, across the fairway and into the rough.

From there, he hit a pitch-and-run that threaded the bunkers and raced some 30 feet by the hole. Two putts later, he had a double bogey.

"It was a really, really poor decision on the second shot, and that cost me," Spieth said.

A perfect shot with that 6-iron might have given him a reasonable look at birdie. Anything less and he was asking for trouble, which he got.

"I could have hit a 5-iron easily and just said, 'You know what? I'm out of position. Hit it to 50 feet and two-putt,'" he said. "It just took me three more shots to get to that point."

His troubles didn't end there. He missed the green well to the right on the par-3 16th, so far out of position that he did well just to get it on the green and made bogey. And on the closing hole, he hit a weak fade to the right that failed to clear Barry Burn, the winding, rock-walled creek that meanders along the final two holes.

Spieth wasn't about to blame this on bad breaks, because he got his share of good ones to reach 3 under through 14 holes. His tee shot on No. 1 stopped just short of a pot bunker. His approach on No. 2 hopped off a hillock to about 10 feet for birdie. He made a dangerous play from a pot bunker in the seventh fairway, hitting 9-iron from 137 yards that cleared the top of the lip with inches to spare.

Unlike when he opened with a 78 at the U.S. Open, he said he could at least recover from a 72.

"So it's not a bad place to be. A solid round tomorrow to stay in the top 25, top 20 will be kind of the goal tomorrow to feel like I can do something on the weekend."



JON SUPER/AP

American Kevin Kisner plays off the 18th tee Thursday during the first round of the British Open in Carnoustie, Scotland.

MLB



STEVEN SENNE/AP

Boston's Brock Holt, left, celebrates with Xander Bogaerts after beating Toronto on Sunday. The Red Sox won 12 of their last 13 games to break the streak with the best record in baseball.

Red Sox confident they won't cool off

By JIMMY GOLEN
Associated Press

BOSTON — The Boston Red Sox had the second-best start in franchise history, and still they are struggling to shake the New York Yankees in the AL East.

So manager Alex Cora doesn't have to fear that they will lose their focus when they return from the All-Star break.

"There's a few good teams out there, that they're going to make it interesting in the second half," he said last week. "I still feel we can be better. We've still got some challenges in front of us. Just because we had a good first half of the season doesn't mean we're going to go all the way."

After winning 12 of their last 13 games to reach the break with the best record in baseball (68-30), the Red Sox have a season-high 4½-game lead in the division. Their .694 winning percentage is second-best to the 1946 team that Ted Williams led to the All-Star break at .701 (54-23). That team started 68-28-2, the only one in franchise history to fare better in its first 98 games.

"Hopefully when we come back we'll pick it up right where we left off," shortstop Xander Bogaerts said. "The team that we have, with this group of guys, I don't see no reason that this won't continue."

They have had more than their share of exceptional individual performances, too.

Mookie Betts'.359 batting average leads all of the majors, and his slugging and on-base percentage are also the best in baseball.

J.D. Martinez is the major league leader with 40 RBIs, and his 29 homers are tied for the most.

All-Star starter Chris Sale is No. 1 with 188 strikeouts, and closer Craig Kimbrel is second with 30 saves, including 21 in a row.

"We have a very powerful, potent offense that can score from anywhere, and a good bullpen,"

Betts said. "I think just keep doing what we've been doing in the first half. It seemed to work pretty good."

The Red Sox have had regular season success before, including AL East titles in each of the past two years that were the first back-to-back division championships in franchise history. But they won just one playoff game over those two postseasons, and manager John Farrell was replaced by Cora.

A 42-year-old former infielder who was on the roster of Boston's 2007 World Series championship team, Cora was on the bench for the Houston Astros when they won it all last year. But he noted that only one pitcher on his current team — Brandon Workman — has a World Series ring.

David Price has never won a postseason start. Sale had never even appeared in a playoff game until last year, when he picked up a pair of losses (one in an otherwise strong relief appearance).

"[The team] understands that the last few years they didn't finish it," Cora said. "If you look at their career and they retire right now, they should be proud of their accomplishments, but at the same time, they want a ring, they want it. That's what they're pushing for."

Cora gave up a chance to be in the All-Star Game dugout when he left the World Series champion Astros to take over in Boston. But he said he was proud of former players like Alex Bregman, Jose Altuve and Charlie Morton, and he was looking forward to seeing how the five Red Sox on the AL roster would do.

And he knows how to make sure he doesn't miss the 2019 game in Cleveland.

"Like my daughter Camila said: 'Next year,'" he said. "There's always next year."

AP freelancer Ken Powtak contributed to this story.

Scoreboard

American League

	W	L	Pct	GB
East Division				
Boston	68	30	.694	—
New York	62	33	.653	4½
Tampa Bay	49	47	.510	18
Toronto	43	52	.453	23½
Baltimore	28	69	.289	39½
Central Division				
Cleveland	52	43	.547	—
Minnesota	44	50	.468	7½
Detroit	41	57	.418	12½
Chicago	33	62	.347	19
Kansas City	27	68	.284	25
West Division				
Houston	64	35	.646	—
Seattle	58	39	.598	5
Oakland	55	42	.567	8
Los Angeles	49	48	.505	14
Texas	41	56	.423	22

National League

	W	L	Pct	GB
East Division				
Philadelphia	53	42	.558	—
Atlanta	52	42	.553	½
Washington	48	50	.500	5½
Miami	41	57	.418	13½
New York	39	55	.415	13½
Central Division				
Chicago	55	38	.591	—
Milwaukee	43	43	.500	2½
St. Louis	48	46	.511	7½
Pittsburgh	48	49	.495	8
Cincinnati	43	53	.448	13½
West Division				
Los Angeles	53	43	.552	—
Arizona	53	44	.546	½
Colorado	54	45	.531	2
San Francisco	50	50	.500	4
San Diego	40	59	.404	14½

AL 8, NL 6, 10 innings
Friday's game
St. Louis at Chicago Cubs

Friday's games

Baltimore (Sunday 6-9) at Toronto (Gaviglio 2-3)

Boston (Price 10-6) at Detroit (Boyd 4-6)

Cleveland (TBD) at Texas (Perez 2-4)

Los Angeles (Gibson 4-6) at Kansas City (Duffy 2-8)

Houston (Keuchel 7-8) at L.A. Angels (TBD)

Chicago White Sox (TBD) at Seattle (LeBlanc 5-1)

St. Louis (TBD) at Chicago Cubs (TBD)

Atlanta (Sanchez 4-2) at Washington (Strasburg 5-6)

N.Y. Mets (Syndergaard 5-1) at N.Y. Yankees (German 2-6)

San Diego (Richard 7-8) at Philadelphia (TBD)

Miami (Strally 3-4) at Tampa Bay (Eovaldi 5-6)

Pittsburgh (Tallion 6-7) at Cincinnati (Mahle 2-7)

L.A. Dodgers (TBD) at Milwaukee (TBD)

San Francisco (Rodriguez 4-1) at Oakland (Jackson 1-1)

Colorado (Marquez 8-8) at Arizona (TBD)

Saturday's games

N.Y. Mets (Matz 4-7) at N.Y. Yankees (Gray 6-7)

Baltimore (TBD) at Toronto (Stroman 2-7)

Boston (Johnson 1-2) at Detroit (Fiers 6-6)

Miami (Lopez 1-1) at Tampa Bay (TBD)

Cleveland (Verlander 9-5) at L.A. Angels (Trepanore 3-4)

Minnesota (Lynn 7-7) at Kansas City (TBD)

Cleveland (Carrasco 11-5) at Texas (TBD)

San Francisco (Bumgarner 3-3) at Oakland (TBD)

San Diego White Sox (Covey 3-5) at Seattle (Hernandez 8-7)

San Diego (Weaver 5-6) at Chicago Cubs (TBD)

St. Louis (Garcia 3-3) at Chicago Cubs (TBD)

Atlanta (Newcomb 8-5) at Washington (Gonzalez 6-6)

San Diego (Perdomo 1-4) at Philadelphia (Velasquez 6-5)

Dodgers (TBD) at Milwaukee (TBD)

Pittsburgh (Kingham 4-4) at Cincinnati (Schmidt 4-4)

Colorado (Freeland 8-6) at Arizona (TBD)

Calendar

July 29 — Hall of Fame inductions, Cincinnati, N.Y.

July 31 — Last day to trade a player without securing waivers.

Aug. 31 — General manager to be contracted to an organization and be eligible for post-season roster.

Oct. 23 — Wild-card games.

November 1 — Deadline for teams to file their eligible former players who became free agents, fifth day after World Series.

November 1 — Deadline for free agents to accept qualifying offers, 15th day after World Series.

Nov. 6-8 — General managers' meetings, Carlsbad, Calif.

Nov. 9-15 — All-Star tour of Japan.

Dodgers acquire Al-Star Machado

Orioles get Diaz, 4 other prospects in return

By BEN WALKER AND
DAVID GINSBURG
Associated Press

The Los Angeles Dodgers won the Manny Machado sweepstakes, getting the prized All-Star shortstop from the Baltimore Orioles in a trade Wednesday night.

The Orioles received five prospects: outfielder Yussniel Diaz, right-handers Dean Kremer and Zach Pop, and third basemen Rylan Bannon and Breyvic Valera.

Machado, a 26-year-old power hitter with extraordinary fielding skills, greatly improves the Dodgers' chances of reaching the World Series for a second consecutive year. He led Baltimore in batting average (.315), home runs (24) and RBIs (65).

Machado is expected to be introduced in Milwaukee on Friday before the Dodgers open a series against the Brewers.

"We viewed Manny Machado as a big difference maker," Dodgers' general manager Farhan Zaidi said.

The Dodgers are in a close race in the NL West, leading Arizona by a half-game going into the second half.

"Our first hope is we have a division-winning roster," Zaidi said. "Any time you have a chance to add an impact player in a tight division race that's something you have to look at closely."

Machado's contract expires at the end of the season, and the last-place Orioles decided against negotiating an expensive, multi-year extension because they have too many holes as the team moves into a rebuilding mode.

"We tried to maintain a competitive club this year, and that's why we resisted the offers we had in the offseason to trade Manny," Dan Duquette, the Orioles' executive vice president of baseball operations, said. "But when it became obvious that it was time to look to the future, trading Manny is the first step in the plan to rebuild our ballpark."

Asked if the Dodgers would resign Machado, Zaidi demurred.

"Let's have him at least show up in a Dodger uniform before we start asking those questions," he said. "We hope he plays well and creates a good market for himself. We're not worried about what happens past 2018."

Though only a summer rental, Machado was coveted by a variety of clubs, including Philadelphia, Milwaukee, the Chicago Cubs and Arizona.

"We liked the depth of the Dodger package, we liked the quality of the players in the package and we liked Yussniel Diaz, a player we feel is a gifted hitter," Duquette said. "We felt he was clearly the best player offered to us during this recent market. He

was the key to the trade. But the other players in the trade are also very talented."

The 21-year-old Diaz hit two home runs in the All-Star Futures Game last weekend. He's hitting .314 with a .905 OPS with six homers, 30 RBIs and 36 runs scored this season.

Duquette said Valera will be optioned to Triple-A Norfolk, and the other four players will be sent to Double-A Bowie.

Los Angeles gets a four-time AL All-Star with two Gold Glove winners who has 129 homers over the last 3½ seasons. Machado was drafted third overall by the Orioles in 2010, made his big league debut in 2012 and spent his entire major league career in Baltimore.

"Obviously, it's aittersweet day for our organization," Duquette said. "We watched Manny grow up in our franchise the past eight years. We all know what an exceptional talent he is, from the great plays that he made to his elite hitting. He's always going to be a part of our important part of our club."

The Dodgers are filling a gaping hole at shortstop created by the loss of Corey Seager, who is out for the season after undergoing Tommy John surgery in May.

And Machado moves from a cellar-dweller to a division contender in the middle of a pennant race. Not only that, but Machado likely gets to stay at shortstop, the position he manned this year after previously playing third base for Baltimore.

"I love playing short. I mean, I love it," Machado said last week. "I'm more excited playing shortstop than I've ever been. I'm more into the game. This is where I've always wanted to be, this is what brings the best player out of me."

Zaidi said Dodgers manager Dave Roberts has explained to Machado about how much the team values flexibility and versatility in playing different positions.

"Manny being flexible with that and being able to move between shortstop and third, we believe he can be an asset at both those positions," Zaidi said. "When JT [Justin Turner] comes in, Manny's ability and willingness to play third base on those occasions will be really important going forward. Everybody is sort of on the same page about that."

Chris Taylor has been that shortstop for the Dodgers, but his numbers are down from last season.

With Machado at short, the Dodgers could move Taylor to second instead of Logan Forsythe, offensive sensation Max Muncy to first, last year's Rookie of the Year Cody Bellinger to center and still have Enrique Hernandez available to play numerous infield and outfield positions.

MLB

Teams looking for hitters have options

By ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

Manny Machado will be wearing a new uniform when he plays his next game, and other hitters will be on the move in the next couple of weeks.

Even after Machado was traded to the Los Angeles Dodgers, teams seeking to boost their offense will have several options to land a big bat. The four-time All-Star with the Baltimore Orioles was the most coveted player available on the trade market.

There's only one Machado, but several guys can bolster a team's starting lineup and make an impact down the stretch.

Here are eight hitters who may have new teams before the July 31 non-waiver trade deadline:

Mike Moustakas: After smacking a career-best 38 homers for the Kansas City Royals last year, the two-time All-Star third baseman didn't get a lucrative deal in free agency and returned on a one-year deal for \$6.5 million plus a mutual option for 2019. He has 19 homers and 58 RBIs but is only batting .249 for the worst team in the majors.

Scotter Gennett: The Cincinnati Reds aren't going anywhere and they'd be selling high on their All-Star second baseman. Gennett, a waiver claim last year, had a breakout season in 2017 when he swatted 27 homers and drove in 97 runs. He's batting .326 with 16 homers and 63 RBIs this season. Gennett is a fan favorite in his hometown and can't become a free agent until 2020, so prying him away from the Reds might be difficult.



ALEX BRANDON/AP

The Cincinnati Reds' Scotter Gennett celebrates in the NL dugout after his two-run homer in the ninth inning during the All-Star Game on Tuesday in Washington. He's batting .326 with 16 homers and 63 RBIs this season.

Asdrubal Cabrera: The 32-year-old infielder is batting .281 with 17 homers and

52 RBIs for the hapless New York Mets. He's only played second base this season but started at shortstop and third base last year. Cabrera is a switch hitter who would give a team versatility and pop. He's also slated to become a free agent after the season, so the Mets can't expect to get too much in return for the two-time All-Star.

Shin-soo Choo: A first-time All-Star, Choo has 18 homers and is on pace to swat a career-best 30 for the last-place Texas Rangers. Choo is batting .291 with a .405 on-base percentage, but the left-handed hitting right fielder just turned 36 and is owed \$42 million over the next two seasons.

Eduardo Escobar: The versatile infielder has a .271 average, 14 homers and 57 RBIs with 35 doubles for the Minnesota Twins. Escobar can play shortstop, second base or third base, plus he's started in left field during his career. He's making \$4.85 million this season and will be a free agent in the fall.

Wilson Ramos: An All-Star catcher for the second time in three years, Ramos is batting .297 with 14 homers and 53 RBIs for the Tampa Bay Rays. But he injured his hamstring and is heading to the disabled list, decreasing his trade value.

Nick Castellanos: He's having another strong season for the Detroit Tigers after hitting 26 homers and knocking in 101 runs last year. The 26-year-old right fielder is batting .305 with 15 homers and 56 RBIs and is under team control for another season.

Josh Donaldson: The 2015 AL MVP is struggling through an injury-riddled season and has only played 36 games, but he averaged 35 homers and 100 RBIs between 2014-17 and is entering free agency after the season. The Toronto Blue Jays should be eager to move Donaldson if another team is willing to gamble that he'll be healthy enough to make a difference.



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

The Kansas City Royals' Mike Moustakas smacked a career-best 38 homers last year, and has 19 homers and 58 RBIs this year. But he's only batting .249 for the worst team in the majors and what is expected to be a big seller this month.



GAIL BURTON/AP

The Rangers' Shin-Soo Choo follows through on a solo home run against the Baltimore Orioles. Choo has 18 homers and is on pace to swat a career-best 30 for last-place Texas. His contract and age might scare off potential trade partners.

MLB



PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP

Baltimore Orioles relief pitcher Zach Britton is healthy again after an injury cut short his 2017 season. He hasn't allowed a run in 13 of his 15 appearances, meaning he'll have plenty of suitors.



JAE C. HONG/AP

Texas Rangers starting pitcher Cole Hamels has a career-worst 4.36 ERA and he's already allowed 21 homers but he's a proven lefty who could benefit from pitching away from a hitter-friendly ballpark.



JIM MONE/AP

Tampa Bay Rays pitcher Nathan Eovaldi missed the entire 2017 season after Tommy John surgery but may be a cheap option for budget-conscious teams since he's making just \$2 million this season.

High-priced, established hurlers may be on move

By ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

From aces to closers, pitchers will be on the move this month.

Teams trying to make a push for the postseason are always looking to add new arms. There are some big names available on the trade market who can make a difference in the starting rotation or bullpen.

Here are 10 pitchers — five

starters and five relievers — who could be changing uniforms before the July 31 non-waiver trade deadline:

Cole Hamels: The MVP of the 2008 World Series and NLCS has been through this before, going from the Phillies to the Rangers in July 2015. Hamels has a career-worst 4.36 ERA and he's already allowed 21 homers, but he's a proven lefty who could benefit from pitching away from a hitter-friendly ballpark. Hamels has a 2.93 ERA in 10 starts on the road. Texas may have to eat some of his salary, however. His contract includes a team option for \$20 million next year or a \$6 million buyout. Hamels also has a no-trade clause for 20 teams.

J.A. Happ: Another former Phillies lefty, Happ is in the final season of his contract with Toronto. He had three rough starts leading to his first All-Star appearance but has been a consistent starter in baseball's toughest division for a few years. Happ is 10-6 with a 4.29 ERA and is averaging more than one strikeout per inning for the first time in his career in a season in which he's pitched at least 100 innings.

Matt Harvey: After rejuvenating his career in Cincinnati following his release from the Mets earlier this season, Harvey could find himself back in a pennant race. The righty is 5-3 with a 3.64 ERA in 12 starts.

Jordan Zimmermann: He's 4-1 with a 3.79 ERA in 12 starts after an atrocious 2017 season. Zimmermann has the highest strikeout percentage of his career (23.6 percent) but he's owed \$50 million over the next two seasons, so the Detroit Tigers might have to pay

some of his salary to deal him.

Nathan Eovaldi: Back on the mound after missing 2017 following Tommy John surgery, Eovaldi is 3-4 with a 4.59 ERA in nine starts for the Rays. The righty was roughed up in his final start before the All-Star break but pitched well in his previous three starts. He is only making \$2 million this season, so he's a cheap option for budget-conscious teams.

Zach Britton: The hard-throwing lefty had 120 saves between 2014-16 before injury cut his season short in 2017. He's back healthy and hasn't allowed a run in 13 of his 15 appearances. Britton is making \$12 million this season, and the Baltimore Orioles will have plenty of suitors.

Brad Hand: A two-time All-Star, Hand is signed through 2020 with a team option for 2021 and will be one of the most pursued relievers. He has 24 saves with 65 strikeouts in 44 1/3 innings, and the San Diego Padres will be asking for a lot in return.

Raisel Iglesias: The Reds have no urgency to move a 28-year-old closer who won't become a free agent until 2022, but Iglesias can net solid prospects in a trade. He has 19 saves and a 2.36 ERA.

Joaquin Soria: After returning to closing, Soria is having his best season since 2015 in his first year with the White Sox. He has 14 saves and a 2.75 ERA for a team that should be a seller.

Kyle Barraclough: He has a 1.28 ERA and nine saves for Miami in 44 appearances and is under team control for multiple years, so the Marlins will get plenty of calls for the tough righty.

SPORTS

Moving Machado

Dodgers acquire All-Star SS from O's » **MLB, Page 61**

NBA

What next?

Raptors still have work to do after Kawhi trade

By TIM REYNOLDS
Associated Press**R**aptors boss Masai Ujiri better have some magic plan.

Because if he doesn't, Lakers boss Magic Johnson will.

Before Kawhi Leonard and DeMar DeRozan — the headline pieces in a four-player trade between San Antonio and Toronto on Wednesday — play a single game for their new teams, this much is clear: The Spurs got better, the Raptors are taking a gargantuan risk and the Los Angeles Lakers are going to sit back and see what happens.

San Antonio essentially swapped one All-Star for another, riddled itself of a headache — the Leonard-wants-out saga — and got a first-round draft pick as well. Hard to argue.

In DeRozan, Toronto traded away a guard who led the Raptors in scoring in each of the last five seasons for a player who, without hardly ever saying a word, has made clear that he wants to be in Los Angeles. A bold strategy, but if Ujiri can win over Leonard in a year just like Sam Presti and Oklahoma City did with Paul George, it could work out like gangbusters for the Raptors.

And if Leonard doesn't see the virtue in making Toronto home for the long term, the Lakers will be waiting.

Remember what Johnson said earlier this offseason about the Lakers' strategy:

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Inside:

■ Popovich, Spurs move on after swapping stars with Toronto, Page 59

Toronto acquired disgruntled star Kawhi Leonard, pictured, from the San Antonio Spurs on Wednesday. The challenge for Raptors GM Masai Ujiri now becomes persuading the former NBA Finals MVP to remain with the team long-term.

BRIAN VAN DER BRUG, LOS ANGELES TIMES/MCT



Djokovic rejoins Federer, Nadal in 'Big 3' » Tennis, Page 57

